

# Community News



## Flower Power!

Liz's lawn of plenty for bees



**Win two nights 'glamping' at Cwmcarn Forest Drive!**

**Food parcels - How to get one**

**Universal credit - getting prepared**

**How are we doing? checking our performance**



If you would prefer to be sent Community News in an email, large print, braille, audio, Welsh or any other language, then please let us know.

## Welcome

I hope you've been enjoying some of the lovely sunshine we've been having this summer. One of the priorities in our Corporate Plan, which sets out the areas of work that are going to be the most important for us up to 2017, is 'doing what we do already to an excellent standard.' This is about giving the very best services to our tenants and leaseholders. To help us do this, we rely on feedback from you about what we are doing well and where we need to improve. On pages 10-13 you'll find some of the results of our performance for some of our services, based on surveys and reviews carried out by members' groups such as our Quality Design Forum and Service Monitoring Improvement Team.

We'll be holding our first tenant conference on Saturday 9 November at Pontypool Active Living Centre. It'll be a chance to meet staff and other tenants and to get information on things like benefits, managing money and getting involved with Bron Afon. Keep an eye out for more details over the next few months.

Universal Credit is coming in shortly. On pages 8 and 9, there's advice on how to get ready for the changes, apply for a food parcel and how you can rent a room in your home. Remember, if you need help, don't wait until it's too late - give us a call.

**Duncan Forbes** chief executive

## A taster of what's inside

Go Girls' bra campaign p6

How to get a food parcel p8

Win a 2 night glamping stay in Cwmcarn Forest p19



A fyddech cystal a gofyn os hoffech unrhyw ran o'n gwybodaeth yn Gymraeg, Gallwch wneud hynny drwy ymweld â ni neu ysgrifennu atom yn y cyfeiriad isod neu drwy ffonio **01633 620 111**. Os yw'n well gennych siarad â ni drwy gyfrwng y Gymraeg gallwn drefnu i siaradwr Cymraeg fod yn bresennol mewn apwyntiad.

## Got a story?

If you have a story or photo for this magazine please let us know. Maybe you have a tip you want to share or a letter on an interesting subject?

You can tell us your news in lots of ways.

Call **Ben Black** on **01633 620 374**

Call **Vicki Morgan-Curtis** on **01633 620 110**

Text **07837 522 970**

Email **communitynews@bronafor.org.uk**

Write **Bron Afon Community Housing Limited, Tŷ Bron Afon, William Brown Close, Llantarnam Industrial Park, Cwmbran, Torfaen NP44 3AB**

Like our Facebook page: [www.facebook.com/bronafor](http://www.facebook.com/bronafor)



Follow us on Twitter: [www.twitter.com/bronafor](http://www.twitter.com/bronafor)



## "In my own words..."

### Keeping it in the family

Bonnie, Lorna and Ellie



**Lorna Aherne, membership committee member for Cwmbran north, tells us how three generations of her family are helping to make a difference for tenants.**

"Housing has been a passion of mine for a long time. I worked in local government for 30 years before becoming a volunteer at Bron Afon.

"As well as being elected onto the Membership Committee, I have joined several other groups, including the Service Monitoring Improvement team, Communications Forum and West Pontnewydd Area Forum. It's given me the chance to discuss all kinds of issues, from the bedroom tax to bees.

"My daughter, Bonnie, is an income recovery officer. She is also part of the Money Solutions team, who offer advice to tenants who need help to manage their money and

delivers food parcels to tenants who are struggling to afford to eat (see page 8 to find out how you can apply for a food parcel).

"Ellie is also my oldest granddaughter. She works as a carer and is a member of Afon Youth, Bron Afon's forum for young people aged 15-25. Ellie is involved with the Go Girls project, which encourages young women to be the best they can be and Radiate, a project that helps tenants to save money on fuel costs.

"It's really good to know that we are helping to make people's lives easier."

Would you like to help to improve your community? Call us on **01633 620 111** or **Freephone 0800 111 42 42** to find out more about how you can get involved.

# Safety First

Jade Glastonbury, community involvement officer, explains how local primary schools have helped tackle road safety problems.



“Our recent surveys show that parking, speeding and general road safety are causing a lot of concern.

“Along with Communities First, Torfaen’s road safety officer and local Police Community Support Officers, we asked local primary school pupils from Pontnewynydd, Penygarn, Cwmffrdoer and Griffithstown to take part in a road safety workshop.

“120 children took part. They used a speed gun to check speed outside schools, learned about the importance of wearing seatbelts and parking safely and being more aware as a pedestrian. “We also held a ‘design a banner’ competition to highlight the dangers of poor road use. Winners got Halfords vouchers for a bike plus safety gear and runners up got Amazon vouchers. “Teachers have been really impressed with the project and want the sessions to run every year with Year 6.”

## A lovely view at Belle Vue!



Clockwise from the front: Lesley Millar, Thelma Thomas, Carol Edwards, Maralyn Bailon, Cheryl Edwards, Yvonne Morgan, tenant liaison officer and Ricky Edwards.

## Helping Fairwater School to grow their own!



**Pupils at Fairwater School will soon be able to grow vegetables and bee-friendly flowers in what was once the school caretaker’s garden.**

The garden had become overgrown with hedges, grass and weeds when CoStar, a voluntary organisation based in Cwmbran, approached staff from our Grounds Maintenance team (pictured) to ask them to help clear the site.

Ken Phillips, charge hand, said: “It wasn’t an easy job but we managed to create a space for a garden plot and a seating area.

“The project is not only educational but very enjoyable for young people to take part in. There’s still a bit of work to do but the plan is for the pupils to take charge of planting and maintaining the allotment.”

We’ll be back later in the year to check on progress.

Residents at Belle Vue retirement housing scheme in Cwmbran are enjoying their bright and comfy communal lounge. It’s the last one to be decorated and furnished as part of our internal improvement programme.

If you want to find out about living at one of our retirement housing schemes, visit [www.bronafon.org.uk/retirement-housing/](http://www.bronafon.org.uk/retirement-housing/) to watch some tenants talk about how it’s made a difference to their lives.

You can also call us on **01633 620 111** or **Freephone 0800 111 42 42**.

## Our new website

You may have noticed that our website has a brand new look.

We are taking a slow and steady approach with the new site, which means you may find a few things missing. A website can easily start to look like a messy filing cabinet if you keep adding content without thinking. We want to avoid this at all costs!

We will include videos, photos and audio clips, so it’s not just about reading pages of words. Our Communications Forum has helped us to make sure the language is in plain English.

Eventually, you will be able to log in to pay your rent or report a repair online.

In the next few months, we will increase the leaseholders’ pages and will add more information about our staff and community safety.

**What do you think of the new site?** Email Daneka Norman, digital communications controller, at [daneka.norman@bronafon.org.uk](mailto:daneka.norman@bronafon.org.uk)





## Go Girls

Some members of the Go Girls with a few of the donations.

### Help us to help women in Kenya - give us your unwanted bras

The Go Girls, run by Bron Afon and Charter Housing, are collecting unwanted bras as part of an ongoing campaign to provide safety and security for women and girls in Kenya.

Although we take them for granted here, bras are luxury items in Kenya and women who don't have them may be open to abuse. By donating one bra, you are helping to stop this from happening.

You can make a donation at our headquarters in Llantarnam, Charter Housing's offices in Newport or Risca Youth Club.

For more information, call Maria Jones, senior community involvement officer, on **01633 620 111** or **Freephone 0800 111 42 42**.



Are you aged 11-25?  
Join Afon Youth!

These are just some of the reasons why you should!

- Get your voice heard and be listened to.
- Help to improve the image of young people in our communities.
- Take part in training and get work experience.
- Have fun and meet new friends.

### Interested?

Call Maria Jones or Helen Clutterbuck on **01633 620 111** or **Freephone 0800 111 42 42**.

Afon Youth won the Pat Chown award for creativity this year



### Percy gets a new garden

Sheep, pigs and chickens (not real ones!) removed from Percy Watkins' garden during a massive clear-up in June.

Percy, 73, has lived in his Trevethin home for thirty years. After his wife died six years ago, he lost interest in looking after his garden and the clutter just grew and grew.

Now Percy can enjoy his garden again after some of our staff and volunteers from the Council's Ground Force team and Cold Barn Farm, Trevethin, helped to shift over five tonnes of stuff from it.

Percy said: "Owen, my son and I can now enjoy the garden and potter. It gets us out of the house and gives us a new hobby. We have already planted pots with colourful flowers.

"My friend can bring her grand-daughter with her to play in the garden."

Look out for a BBC programme called 'Street Patrol UK' which features Percy's story. It will be on TV in the autumn.



How it was before

After: Owen enjoying the garden

(back) Tony Davies plus Ann Sterry.

(front from left) Dorothy Gaut, Isabel Day, Alison Rawlings.



### Poets' corner

A love of words and a lot of memories brought together residents at Brookland House retirement housing scheme to set up a poetry writing group.

With help from Aspire, Torfaen Council and Literature Wales, members of 'Chatterbox' now meet regularly to write poems on all sorts of topics, such as childhood, marriage and life in general.

Ann Sterry, resident, said: "We really enjoyed the writing sessions with the author, Michael Church. He was brilliant and brought out the best and 'worst' in us!

"We enjoy being creative, expressing ourselves through words and finding out more about each other. It's also lovely to see our work in print."

## Being prepared for Universal Credit

In the near future, you will only make one claim for most benefits. This new way of claiming is called Universal Credit and your benefit will be paid in a single monthly payment in arrears. You will get your payment after your rent is due, so you must make sure you have enough money available to pay your rent.

## Don't wait for the changes to happen - get ready now

- **Open a bank account:** even if you have a poor credit rating, you can open a 'Basic Bank Account'. Go to a local bank and they will help you open an account. You will need to take proof of identity (such as your driving licence) and proof of address, (such as your gas bill). If you don't have either of these documents, call us or The Money Advice Service for advice on 'proving your identity'. Call 0300 500 5000 or go to [www.moneyadviceservice.org.uk](http://www.moneyadviceservice.org.uk)
- **Set up a standing order direct debit:** this means you won't have to remember to pay your rent on time as it will be taken from your account automatically. A bank can help you do this.
- **Get on the internet:** You will have to make your application for your Universal Credit benefits on the internet. There are lots of places in Torfaen where you can use a computer for free, such as your local library, and learn how to get online. Call the Council on **01495 762 200** to find out about free courses.
- **Speak to us:** Universal Credit will be paid monthly but your rent is due weekly. Pay a bit extra now if you can to avoid you going into arrears when Universal Credit first comes in. If you need advice, call us now - don't wait. Call **01633 620 111** or Freephone **0800 111 42 42**.

## Need a food parcel?

Ryan Dorrian, income recovery officer, explains how you can get one.

"We know that a lot of our tenants are finding it hard to make ends meet and are even putting off buying food to pay bills, so we have teamed up with The Trussell Trust and The King's Church in Newport to offer food parcels to people who are struggling.

"Each parcel contains food like sugar, teabags or instant coffee, pasta and tinned fruit. You can collect one from our headquarters in Llantarnam or in special circumstances, we will deliver one to you.

"To apply for a parcel, you will have to fill in an income and expenditure form with a member of our Income team. Give us a call on **01633 620 111** or Freephone **0800 111 42 42**."



## 10 steps to renting a room in your home

Earn up to  
**£4,250**  
tax-free rental  
income per  
year



**Step 1** Ask us for a copy of the Your Benefits Are Changing lodger pack or visit [www.yourbenefitsarechanging.co.uk](http://www.yourbenefitsarechanging.co.uk)

**Step 2** Contact any agency that supplies you with welfare benefits. Take advice beforehand, about any potential impacts a lodger will have on any benefits you receive.

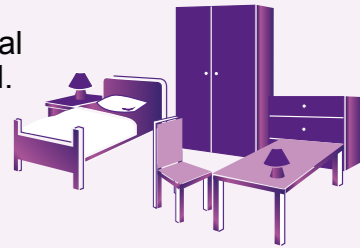
Working with  
Gweithio gyda

**UC** Universal Credit  
Credyd Cynhwysol

**Step 3** Get the room ready. Make sure that the room and your home is clean. If you want to qualify for the tax-free rental income of £4,250 per year, the room has to be furnished.

Generally the furniture should include:

- A bed and mattress.
- Shelves or a small bookcase.
- A wardrobe and chest of drawers.
- A desk or table with lamp and chair.
- A bedside table with lamp.



**Step 4** Check local rents and decide how much to want to let your room for. You could use [spareroom.co.uk](http://spareroom.co.uk) or a local paper. You can use the same forums to advertise your room.



**Step 5** Interview a lodger in person before allowing someone to move in. You'll be sharing your home so you need to get along. Make sure they can pay their rent and tell them about any ground rules. Use the lodger information pack for guidance.



**Step 6** Supply the following information to your housing officer before anyone moves in:

- The name, age, sex and phone number of the lodger(s).
- The amount of income received from taking in a lodger(s).
- The intended period of occupation.
- The part of your home that will be occupied.



**Step 7** Use a lodger agreement and supply a copy of this to your housing officer. An example one is provided in the lodger information pack. You should agree to set up regular payments for the rent and agree ground rules and stick to them.



**Step 8** Inform your home contents and buildings insurance provider. Any lodger would need to insure their own belongings separately.



**Step 9** If you live on your own and receive the single person discount for council tax, you must inform Torfaen Council that you are moving a lodger in.



**Step 10** Inform the tax office if you earn more than £4,250 per year from your lodger(s).



# How are we doing?

## Measuring our performance

Feedback from tenants is very important to us so that we can continue to improve and give the best service we can.

Some of the ways we get information to see how we are doing include:

- Tenant satisfaction surveys
- From groups such as our Quality Design Forum and Service Monitoring Improvement Team

Over the next four pages, you'll find a summary of some of the key areas of our services.

### Managing money - Income and Expenditure 2012/13

Income	£000s	Expenditure	£000s
Rents and Service charges	32,565	Management costs	8,789
Grant	2,102	Routine maintenance	10,230
Other income	2,245	Improvement expenditure	6,588
PV Income	481	Bad debts	583
<b>Total income</b>	<b>37,393</b>	Depreciation of housing properties	3,122
		Community Investment and Involvement costs	1,557
		Other operating costs	613
		Loan interest	2,568
		<b>Total expenditure</b>	<b>34,050</b>

In addition we carry out a substantial amount of improvement work to our properties to ensure we meet and maintain the Welsh Housing Quality Standard. In 2012/13 we spent £33.7m on such work and received Welsh Government funding of £5.8m to help pay for this.

### Rent Debt

The amount of money that tenants owe Bron Afon in rent increased from the end of March 2013 to the end of June 2013 by £69,918. Income from rent is important as it goes towards our day to day running costs and pays for the services we provide you with. We know that many of you are finding times are getting harder. Remember, rent should be one of the first bills you pay, so if you are struggling, we can help. Call us on **0800 111 42 42** or **01633 620 111**.



### The 'bedroom tax'

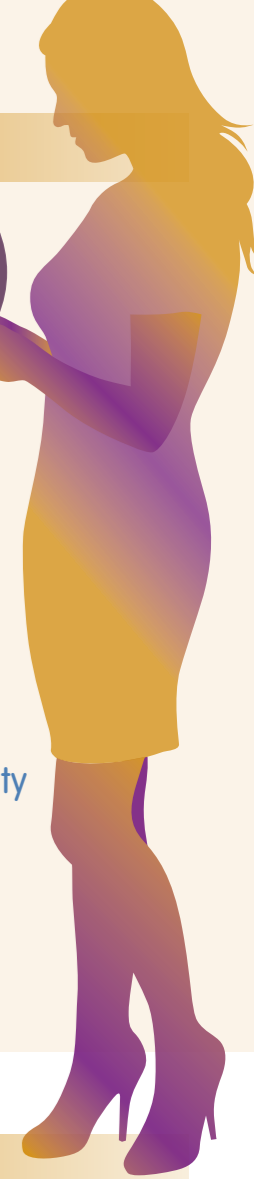
#### What has happened since 1 April 2013?

Our bedroom tax team has:

- Taken 139 calls from tenants
- Made 213 calls to tenants
- Carried out 415 home visits
- Given priority to 67 tenants to move to a smaller home
- Referred 60 tenants to organisations such as Gateway Credit Union, Torfaen Women's Aid and the Citizens' Advice Bureau.
- Out of 190 applications for Discretionary Housing Payments, 135 have been accepted.



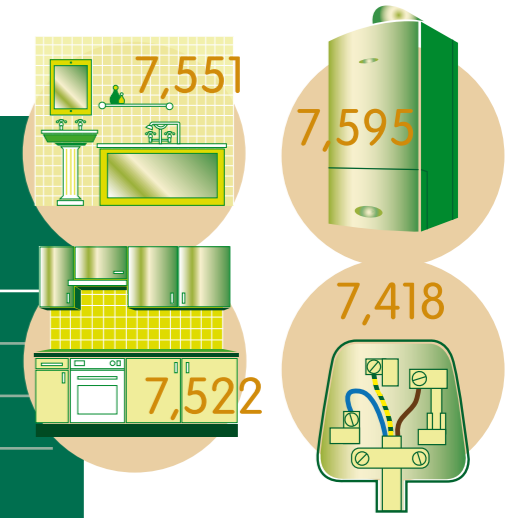
Remember, if you are having difficulty paying your rent or need advice, call us.



### Managing your homes

Three quarters of you told us that you thought our improvements service was 'excellent'.

	What we said we'd finish by end of 2012	What we've actually finished at June 2013
Bathrooms	5,200	7,551
Kitchens	5,500	7,522
Gas Boilers	4,200	7,595
Electrical Rewires	5,500	7,418



### Improving our workforce

We are training our trades staff so that we can carry out a lot of work ourselves, for example, our External Wall Insulation (EWI) programme. With a budget of £1million, we use in-house staff to insulate houses and flats.



## Responsive repairs

	Jan - March 2013	April - June 2013
% of jobs fixed first time	92%	93%
% of jobs fixed within 30 days	84%	77%
Tenant satisfaction	98%	97%
Gas services completed past due date because of no access *	4	4

\* The law requires us to make attempts to gain access to homes to carry out gas checks. If you don't let us in, you are at risk of losing your home. Currently, we are fully complying with the law.

## Adaptations

Our Adaptations Team aims to make everyday life easier for tenants with disabilities by re-fitting their homes with aids suitable for their needs.

	Jan - March 2013	April - June 2013
Major work (e.g. lifts, level access showers)	75	80
Minor work (e.g. grabrails and handrails)	223	224
Average waiting time	39 days	31 days

## External work

This year, we will spend £6.8 million on:

- Improvements to communal areas to flats.
- External Wall Insulation, including The Tower and Monmouth House.
- Retirement housing fire safety work.
- Potential new build homes.

We hope that some of this work will be carried out by our own trades staff.



## Time taken to rent our empty homes

2011/12	2012/13	2013-14 to date
91 days	55 days	37 days

During this time, we carry out improvement work to make sure these homes are ready for tenants to move into.

## Calling us

### Speed of answering calls

	August 2012	July 2013
Repairs helpdesk	12 minutes	1 minute
General helpdesk	3 minutes	3 minutes



### What we are doing to improve

We are increasing the size of our team and are training staff so that they can answer callers' questions the first time they ring us.

## Aspire

Aspire provides a range of services for older people and training and employment opportunities for a wide range of volunteers.

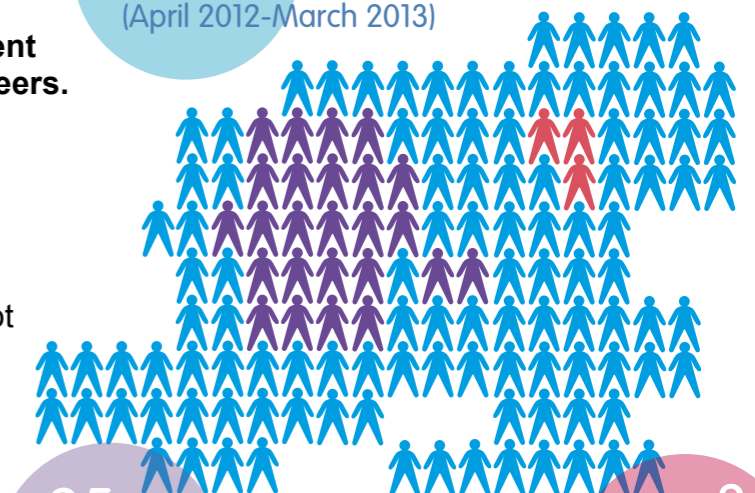
**Volunteering** There are 217 volunteers. Between April 2012 and March 2013, we recruited 137 volunteers.

Since the launch of Aspire, 50 (25 between April 2012-March 2013) volunteers have got jobs, a university course or are on a pathway to employment. 3 out of those 50 volunteers were successful in launching their own businesses such as de-cluttering, cleaning and music entertainment.

**Aspire for Action Work Club** was launched in March 2013 and has supported 71 tenants with CV writing, job searching and using computers. Within a three month period, 12 of the participants have got permanent jobs and 8 participants have got volunteer placements with Bron Afon teams including Community Housing, Corporate Services, Facilities and Community Involvement.

137

volunteers recruited  
(April 2012-March 2013)



25

volunteers got jobs, university courses or are on a pathway to employment  
(April 2012-March 2013)

3

volunteers have started their own businesses  
(Since Aspire launch)

12

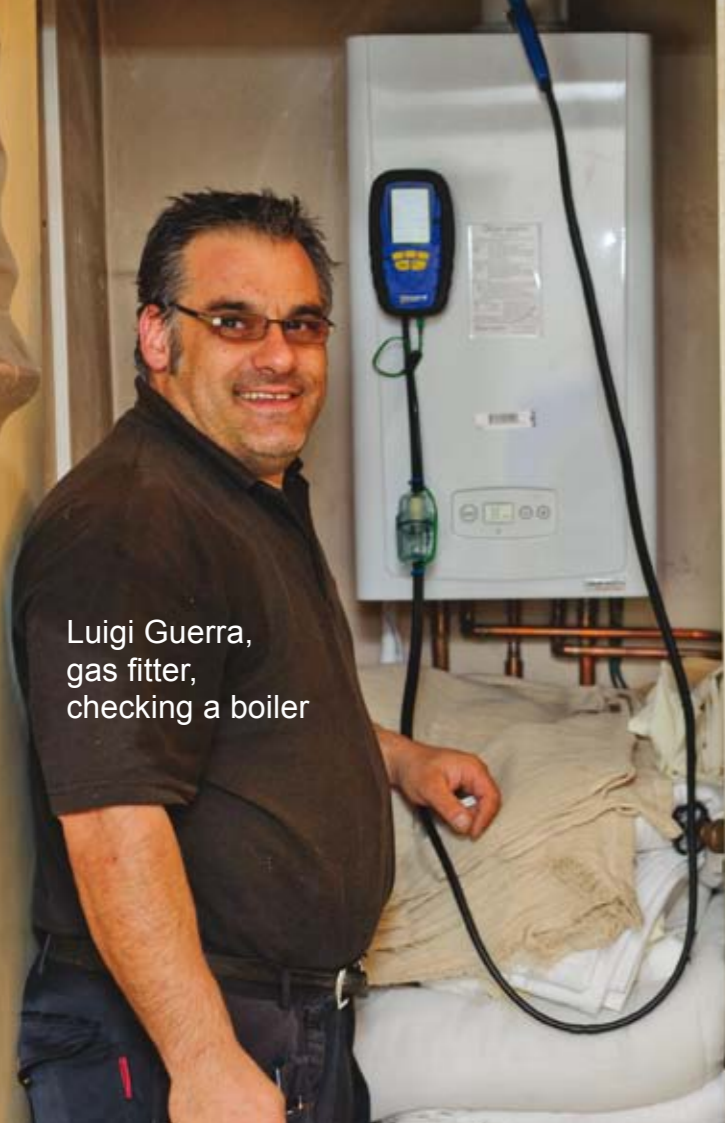
tenants got jobs after support from Work Club  
(March - May 2013)

71

tenants supported through Work Club  
(March - May 2013)

8

tenants got volunteer placements with Bron Afon  
(March - May 2013)



Luigi Guerra,  
gas fitter,  
checking a boiler

## Keeping you safe

### - it's important to let us check your gas

We are legally responsible for carrying out a yearly gas safety check/service in your home.

We'll send you an appointment card around ten days before we are due to come to do the gas check. If you have given us your mobile number, we'll text you two days before your appointment.

If we can't get access, we'll leave a warning card to remind you that you have seven days to contact us to re-arrange your appointment. If you don't do this, we will seek possession of your home to allow us to get access.

If for any reason you can't be in for us to carry out a gas check, call our Repairs helpdesk as soon as you can on **01633 620 111** or **Freephone 0800 111 42 42**.

## Leaseholder News

### Leasehold Conference

Some of our leaseholders enjoyed their first leasehold conference held at our headquarters back in May. The free event offered information stands, presentations from the Leasehold Advisory Service (LEASE) and one-to-one sessions with LEASE for leaseholders, who wanted independent advice.

Thanks to everyone who came along. Feedback from the conference was very positive, with many saying they found it useful or very useful. Your comments will help us when we plan next year's conference.

### Use of communal areas - dos and don'ts

The communal areas of blocks must not be used for the storage of personal belongings. This includes things like prams and bikes, which should be stored inside your flat. If anything is stolen or damaged when left in a communal area, it is unlikely to be covered by insurance.

## Lettings business

Are you a landlord?  
Do you have any properties  
in Torfaen that we  
could manage for you?



left to right:  
Vanessa Perkins and Sarah Clayton

We are setting up a lettings business to increase the supply of affordable, decent rented homes.

If you think we can help, call Sarah Clayton or Vanessa Perkins, lettings co-ordinators, on **01633 620 111** or **Freephone 0800 111 42 42**.

## Ten tips for fire safety at home

By taking some simple precautions, you could prevent a fire happening in your home.

- 1 Make sure your smoke alarms are working. Test them once a week.
- 2 Keep children out of the kitchen when you are cooking.
- 3 Keep matches and lighters well out of the reach of children.
- 4 Never turn away from hot fat.
- 5 Don't put more than one plug in a socket. Check for broken plugs and loose wires.
- 6 Don't leave lighted cigarettes. Make sure they are put out.
- 7 Don't smoke in bed.
- 8 Don't leave lighted candles on their own.
- 9 Keep clothing away from heating appliances.
- 10 Make sure everyone in your house knows how to escape if there is a fire.



Please hang your washing inside your flat or in the communal drying area, if your block has one.

If we find items in the communal areas, you will be asked to remove them and if they are a fire risk, you must do this immediately. If you don't remove your belongings, we will be forced to remove them and you may be recharged for our costs.

If you have problems with residents (tenants or leaseholders) leaving personal belongings in the communal areas, please let us know. Speak to your leasehold officer or call the Leasehold Management team on **01633 620 111** or **Freephone 0800 111 42 42**.





## Membership Committee news

This is a new section that will keep you up to date with what's happening on our Membership Committee.

To kick off, here's some information on the group from Joan Brown and Dorothy Morland, committee members for north Cwmbran.

"The Membership Committee is made up twenty five tenants and residents, who have been elected to keep an eye on how the Board runs Bron Afon. Tenants are always in the majority.

"We give our point of view on issues that residents tell us they are concerned about and we have a major say in decisions made by the Board. These include things like our anti social behaviour policy and pet policy.

"To find out who the representative for your area is, give us a call.

"Anyone is welcome to observe one of our meetings. If you would like to come along, please call Chris Davies, admin officer, on **01633 620 111** or **Freephone 0800 111 42 42.**"

### Join us for our tenant conference

Our first tenant conference will be held on **Saturday 9 November** at Pontypool Active Living Centre. Look out for more details on Facebook, Twitter and our website over the next few months.

### Homeseeker goes online

From August this year, Homeseeker will be moving online. If you have applied already, you will be able to place bids, complete your re-registration and update your application online by logging in at **www.torfaenhomeseeker.org.uk**.

If you want to join the register, you can go online to do an application that will be simpler, shorter and easier to fill in.

If you don't have internet access, you can get help by calling **01495 742 409** or by going along to a surgery at any of the Council's customer care centres.



## What's occurring on the Board?



Louise Kirby  
Bron Afon Board

### Hi everyone

I do hope you've been getting a chance to enjoy this lovely weather. It has been a welcome change and I am looking forward to enjoying some walks around Torfaen.

We've recently appointed a new Chair, Deb Smyth, and Vice Chair, Liz Haynes. I am sure you'll continue to see them both out and about in the community.

You probably won't be surprised to hear that we are spending a lot of time discussing the impact of the benefit changes. As well as this, we have been making sure that Bron Afon's finances are sound and have been talking about a lot of topics which affect us on a daily basis, including an interesting review of anti-social behaviour.

We'll shortly be looking at the 'Housing Association Regulatory Assessment', a report written by the Welsh Government, which outlines what we're doing well and what we need to improve. It's on our website if you want to take a look at it - go to **www.bronafon.org.uk**.

You can also find out more about what the Board has been discussing lately by watching a short video on the website.

**Louise Kirby**  
on behalf of the Bron Afon Board

## Annual General Meeting

This year, our Annual General Meeting (AGM) will be held on **Tuesday 10 September** at The Millenium Hall, Garndiffaith from 6pm to 7.30pm. Anyone is welcome to attend.

For more information, call us on **01633 620 111** or **Freephone 0800 111 42 42.**

## DO YOU HAVE A GOOD 'VALUE FOR MONEY' IDEA?

What comes to mind when you think of 'value for money'? You may think it's all to do with finding the cheapest cost but it is basically about three things:

- Economy** - paying the best price.
- Efficiency** - doing things the best way.
- Effectiveness** - doing things right.



For us, getting value for money across all our services is a top priority and we are really keen to hear from you if you have a good idea for how we can do it.

Get in touch with **Michelle Edwards**, continuous improvement officer, on **01633 620 111** or email **michelle.edwards@bronafon.org.uk**.

## Can you help us?

Our Service Monitoring Improvement team would like to find out what you think about our services. They'll be reviewing our repairs service first.

You don't have to attend meetings - all you have to do is fill in a simple form and send it to the team. If you would like to get involved, please call Jen Brankley, community involvement officer, on **01633 620 111** or **Freephone 0800 111 42 42.**

## News in brief

- **Need some help to use the Internet?** Call Communities First on **01495 742 681**.
- **Looking for work?** Our job club runs every Wednesday from 1pm-3pm at our office in Llantarnam. You can get help writing your cv, searching for jobs on the Internet, filling in application forms, careers advice and building your confidence. Call us on **01633 620 111/ Freephone 0800 111 42 42**.
- **Newport Mediation** is an independent, charitable organisation that uses trained volunteer mediators to help tenants to sort out disputes with neighbours. For more information, contact Newport Mediation directly on **01633 858 441** or go to their website: **www.mediationinwales.co.uk**
- **Quality streets:** we run estate inspections across Torfaen throughout the year. To find out when and where they are taking place in your area, visit our website: **www.bronafon.org.uk** or give us a call on **01633 820 111/Freephone 0800 111 42 42**.
- **Summer open access playschemes** are taking place throughout Torfaen until 22 August. To find out more, go to **www.torfaen.gov.uk** or call the Play Team on **01495 742 951**.

## It's a bee thing!

**We are running a competition with Friends of the Earth to raise awareness of the decline of bees.**

We'd like you to come up with ways to show everyone how important bees are to us and how we can help them survive.

There will be a monthly prize draw until October. The best of the bunch will be put forward to a grand final in late October.

Anyone can enter - just you, a school, a community group or a bunch of friends.

You could:

- **Create a bee garden with bee-friendly flowers.**
- **Make a bee house or hotel**
- **Dress up as a bee!**
- **Sing a song or rap**
- **Make a short film**

Just tell us what you are doing and send some photos or film to us via our Facebook page (search for 'it's a bee thing'). You can also give/ email your entry to Tanya Aicardi, community involvement officer - **tanya.aicardi@bronafon.org.uk**.

**Good luck!**



# Go Glamping!

**Your chance to win two nights of 'glamping' in the beautiful setting of Cwmcarn Forest.**

Ever wanted to go camping but been put off by the thought of a wet tent, mud, bugs, cold and the canvas flapping in the night?

Then why not enter our fantastic competition to win a voucher for two nights of family (up to four people) 'glamping' in a pod (a kind of wooden tent) at Cwmcarn Forest Campsite in Crosskeys?! Each pod is insulated, has double glazing, heating, lighting and electric. It has its own picnic and BBQ facilities and parking space.

Cwmcarn Forest Campsite has on-site facilities, such as male and female toilets and showers, a kitchen and a laundry.



You would still have to bring all of your camping gear - but not your tent!

To be in with a chance of winning, all you have to do is answer this question:

**What is the name of Bron Afon's café?**

Send your answer with your name, address and daytime phone number to Vicki Morgan-Curtis, communications and marketing officer,

Tŷ Bron Afon, William Brown Close, Llantarnam Industrial Park, Cwmbran, Torfaen NP44 3AB or email **communitynews@bronafon.org.uk**. Closing date for entries: **Friday 13 September, 2013.**

**We will call the winner with the good news!**

**Many thanks to Cwmcarn Forest Campsite for donating this great prize.**

\*No alternative prize is available. You have to live in Torfaen to enter. Voucher is valid for one year from Monday 2 September 2013 and can't be used on bank holiday weekends.

# Flower Power!



Great news for bees in New Inn!

Liz paints beautiful watercolours of wild flowers



A life long love of plants prompted one of our tenants to let her grass grow wild - with amazing results.

Elizabeth Parry, 80, who lives in New Inn, decided not to get her lawn cut to see if any wild flowers would take root. After only four weeks, a colourful carpet of wild flowers, including a bee orchid (pictured above), had sprung up.

Elizabeth is now trying to persuade her neighbours to do the same with their lawns. She said, "I'm very keen to encourage flowers to grow and for bees to feed and breed here.

"It's brought back fond memories of my childhood, when I'd go for walks with my father, who would point out wild flowers and tell me the names of the plants."

## In other bee news...



**Friends of the Earth have nominated sixty sites across the UK as 'bee worlds.'** We are really pleased to have been given four of them. At the time of going to print, we have launched two - one at Ponthir School and one at Bron Afon HQ.



Back in May, one of our Cwmbran community teams joined pupils and staff from Ponthir School to celebrate a special Bee Festival. There was a 'bee parade', workshops, songs and dancing by the pupils. Our community team helped young people make bee houses, pot up sunflowers and plant bee-friendly plants.

Everyone had a fantastic time, including Busy Bee, our mascot!

