



Merthyr Valleys Homes
ANNUAL REPORT 2010-2011
Shortened Version



Our 2nd Annual General Meeting was held on the 27th of September in Soar Chapel, Merthyr Tydfil. It was well attended by Board members, tenants, leaseholders, community organisations and councillors.

During this meeting we published our 2010 – 2011 Annual Report. Read our shortened version enclosed.

If you would like the full version please contact us on 0800 085 7843 or visit our office in Merthyr.

Croeso

Welcome to this snapshot of our 2010-2011 Annual Report which gives an insight to some of the work and progress made in delivering the promises to tenants and leaseholders made at the time of transfer in 2009.

There is no doubt that the last year has been challenging. We have seen a number of changes in the senior management of the organisation, aimed at ensuring improved delivery of our services and we are now looking forward to more settled times. We also faced some major external challenges including the maintenance of services through some of the harshest weather for many years and dealing with a huge increase in calls for assistance during that period.

I am proud that the Board and staff have continued to focus on improving services to tenants. My sincere thanks are extended to the staff, my colleagues on the Board and our partners in the tenant and community groups with whom we work. They have all demonstrated real commitment and flexibility over the last twelve months.

In the coming year we will be increasing our efforts to deliver the standard of service our

tenants have the right to expect and to make sure all our homes reach the Welsh Housing Quality Standard by 2014 - 2015 which means they will:

- Be in a good state of repair.
- Be safe and secure.
- Be adequately heated, fuel efficient and well insulated.
- Have up-to-date kitchens and bathrooms.
- Be well managed.
- Be located in attractive and safe environments.
- Suit the specific needs of the household.

In April 2011 our new Chief Executive, Mike Owen, joined us from the very successful Carrick Housing in Cornwall. Mike has already introduced a range of changes that have improved our services to tenants and the Board and I am confident that, working with Mike and his team, we will see real progress in the coming year.

As we move towards our third year, we want our tenants to know that every member of the Board and every member of staff will be working to provide a service to members of which we can all be proud, making sure that our promises are delivered.

**David Lewis,
Chair**

Our Performance

Repairing homes

In 2009, we promised to deliver a faster repairs service and a programme of planned maintenance to keep properties up to standard. This included completing all

- Emergency repairs within 24 hours
- Urgent repairs within 3 days
- Routine repairs within 15 working days.

We measure and monitor our performance very carefully. Last year this is how we measured up against these promises.

**• Emergency repairs 99.11%
completed within 24 hours**

**• Urgent repairs 93.85%
completed within three days**

**• Routine repairs 90.41%
completed within 15 days**

And we were pleased that 93% of our tenants said they were satisfied with the work completed. We will continue to work hard to improve these figures.

Safe homes

The percentage of our properties with a valid landlord Gas Safety Record for the year ending 31 March 2011 was 99.32%. Gas safety is one of our most important areas of work and we will only be satisfied when every home has been tested.

Improving our homes - Welsh Housing Quality Standard

One of our key promises developed and agreed with tenants before the transfer from the council was that Merthyr Valleys Homes would deliver a 30 year programme of planned repairs and modernisation works worth £357 million. This challenge is underway and so far we have:

- Fitted 349 modern kitchens.
- Fitted 247 new bathrooms.
- Rewired or upgraded the electrics in 363 homes.
- Installed new double glazed UPVC windows in 205 homes.
- Installed new double glazed UPVC doors in 130 homes.
- Fitted the most energy efficient gas boilers in 310 homes.

Improving our neighbourhoods

Our tenants tell us how important managing nuisance, crime and anti-social behaviour is to them. We promised to develop clear policies for dealing with anti-social behaviour, to work in partnership with the police and other agencies to deal effectively with anti-social behaviour and to give serious nuisance our top priority.

We are proud to be able to report this year that Merthyr Valleys Homes is now one of only seven housing associations out of 37 in Wales which has achieved the Wales Housing Management Standard for Anti-Social Behaviour. This is a clear signal that we take all incidents of anti-social behaviour very seriously. And of course this means that problems are being dealt with quickly and effectively.

Housing and support

We promised to develop new ways of working to improve services for tenants and we are pleased with the services we have introduced.

Swap Shop Scheme Merthyr Valleys Homes has introduced the 'Swap Shop' scheme to help tenants by exchanging their homes with other assured and secure tenants. The 'Swap Shop' scheme is in addition to the 'Tai Dewis' Allocation scheme.

Our Performance

Decoration Allowance

New tenants are now able to buy a variety of decorating materials from B & Q using an electronic payment card during the first three months of their new tenancy. The new scheme avoids the need for customers to find money up front to buy decorating materials and then wait to be reimbursed. We know from feedback that this has been well received.

Scottish Southern Energy (SWALEC) – Void Management Scheme

Merthyr Valleys Homes set up a partnership with SSE as the default energy supplier of gas and electricity for our new customers. This helps make the move into a new home go more smoothly by removing difficulties such as delays in arranging and installing new meters, debts left on meters by former tenants and inaccurate meter readings.

Involving our community

In 2009, we promised to offer a range of ways for tenants and leaseholders to get involved in running and monitoring the business. We worked with tenants to improve the way we work together. A new Resident Participation Forum was established to provide an overview of all tenant participation opportunities and links with the Board. And we are

delighted that the number of tenants interested in being involved in our service is increasing steadily and these forums and panels better reflect the communities they represent.

Supporting our community

We are committed to using our spending power to support the regeneration of our local community. In the 2010 – 2011 financial year Merthyr Valleys Homes spent more than £10 million – which is 64% of our annual budget - in the local community and a further £2.7million in the rest of Wales. We also supported our local voluntary sector by regularly buying goods and services from them. This increased from £2,600 in 2009/10 to £6,500.

Supporting local organisations

Our Grant Panel is made up of tenants and Board members and last year we supported 22 different local groups including sports and community groups, groups working with children, older people and the vulnerable in our community by awarding more than £36,000.

Our Finances

Where our income came from in 2011	2011 £'000	2010 £'000
Rent	12,361	12,242
Supporting People Grant	37	30
Other Grant Income	90	21
Other Income	237	80
Property Sales	388	129
Total	13,113	12,502

How it was spent	2011 £'000	2011 %	2010 £'000	2010 %
Operating and employee costs	7,134	60%	6,912	60%
Repairs and development	4,395	36%	4,127	36%
Mortgage costs	660	4 %	525	4%
	12,189	100%	11,564	100%

Board Members

During our Annual General Meeting, two new members were appointed on to our Board.

Chair

David Lewis

Independent Board member

In 1979 David became the first chief officer of a community housing association. His experience of social housing continued until his retirement as Chief Executive of the Cynon Tâf Community Housing Group in March 2010. David made a significant contribution to the formation of the Welsh Housing Associations Council (now Community Housing Cymru) and has subsequently served on the National Council for two separate terms. David initiated the formation of Care & Repair Rhondda Cynon Tâf and was Treasurer of Care & Repair Cymru prior to becoming its Chair in 2001. In March 2010 David was again elected as Chair.

Deputy Chair

Avril Richards

Tenant Board member

Avril has a long record of voluntary and community work. This has included:

- Working for the WVS (Women's Voluntary Service) for the Army in Germany and then in the Prince Charles Hospital.
 - Working in a cancer research shop in Brecon for two years.
 - Participation in Merthyr Naturalist for 20 years.
-

Tenant Board Members

Frances Bevan

Frances' background is in general and psychiatric nursing, National Health Service management and as Nursing Manager for 12 nursing homes in the private sector. Frances has served as Chair of Governors of a local high school. She sat on the South Wales Independent Advisory Group, a police group relating to race relations and diversity.

Gareth Adams

Re-elected

Gareth is a retired miner and lives with his family on the Gurnos Estate. Gareth has had 10 years' involvement with New Gurnos Residents Board and currently holds the post of treasurer. He is a founder member of Gurnos and Galon Uchaf regeneration project which developed into the 3Gs Development Trust of which Gareth is an Associate Director. He is also on the management team of the Equal Project promoting training and lifelong learning.

Jacqueline Sullivan

New

Jacqueline has extensive experience working within the public sector. Jacqueline has worked as a nurse's aide, and within the role has implemented a Hospice Care programme, and has helped to co-ordinate a Health Eating programme within the community. More recently, Jacqueline has studied business administration at Merthyr College, where she now works, and is currently working towards a degree in Business Management.

Board Members

Council Board Members

Bill Smith

Bill had had a long career in the transport industry in Wales. He worked for public transport and then privatised bus companies.

In 1996 Bill became the Mayor of Merthyr Tydfil Borough Council. He has held a range of senior elected posts since this time. Bill is currently a member of the Home of Life project board for the development of two new care homes in Merthyr Tydfil.

Bill is a labour councillor for the Gurnos ward.

Howard Barrett

Howard's involvement with other organisations includes the Brecon Beacons National Park, Taf Fechan Nature Reserve, Age Concern Mid Glamorgan, RoSPA, and Wales Home Safety Council. He has recently been appointed Open Space Champion and is on the Local Access Forum (LAF) for Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council.

Howard is an independent Councillor representing the Vaynor ward.

Chris Davies

Chris's background is in Community Development with nearly 9 years spent as a volunteer and paid officer working on the Gurnos and Galon Uchaf housing estates.

Chris is an independent Councillor representing the Penydarren ward.

Clive Tovey

Clive qualified as a doctor in 1989 and started work a few days later in Prince Charles Hospital. Clive has worked around the UK (mainly in South Wales) and qualified as an A&E consultant in 1996. He returned to Merthyr Tydfil to work as an A&E consultant in November 2000.

Clive has actively been involved in the administration of the Authority and took up office as Mayor of the County Borough of Merthyr Tydfil 2010 to 2011.

Clive is an independent Councillor representing the Gurnos ward.

Independent Board Members

Martin Jones

Martin has had a long career in the finance and banking sector. He worked in local high street banks for a number of years and has experience in most areas of banking including commercial and customer support service. Martin was born in the Merthyr Valleys and has lived in the local area all of his life. Martin currently works for the 3Gs Development Trust as the Finance Manager.

Stephanie Howarth

New

Stephanie is a Commercial Property Lawyer with Stone King Solicitors, and is currently Head of Corporate Social Responsibility within the organisation. Stephanie was brought up and educated in Merthyr Tydfil, and originally qualified as a nurse in the forces. Later in her career, Stephanie re-trained as a solicitor, and qualified in 1998. In addition to her 'day job', Stephanie has been involved with charitable organisations, and is keen to put something back into the community. Stephanie currently resides in Merthyr Tydfil

Vacancy

Board Members

Co-opted Board Members

Elaine Ballard

Elaine has worked for both local authorities and housing associations in roles that have included allocations, homelessness, housing strategy and housing management. Elaine has been Chief Executive of Taff Housing Association for the last 10 years. Taff has been listed as one of the Top 50 workplaces in the UK for the past five years, and received the best audit report in Wales from the Wales Audit Office during the last round of inspections.

Stephen Cook

Stephen joined Valleys to Coast as Chief Executive in November 2008. Previously he had been Managing Director of Fosseway Living, a housing association based in the Cotswolds. Stephen's housing career started in the early 1980s in local government working in Bristol, Sussex, Wiltshire and Gloucestershire before joining Fosseway in 1997. A Fellow of the Chartered Institute of Housing, he was a member of the CIH's national council between 2004 and 2010.

Tom Lewis

Tom has over 30 years experience of working within local government. Tom has represented Dowlais and Pant for 26 years on Mid Glamorgan County Council and Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council. In 1997 Tom held the position of Mayor. Tom has served on various Boards and panels, and has held various Chairman positions, including 33 years as Chairman of the Governors of Pant School, and as Vice-Chairman of Merthyr Institute for the Blind.

Board Members



David Lewis



Avril Richards



Frances Bevan



Gareth Adams



Bill Smith



Howard Barrett



Chris Davies



Clive Tovey



Martin Jones



Stephanie Howarth



Elaine Ballard



Stephen Cook



Jacqueline Sullivan

The Role of the Board

The Board and its committees have ultimate responsibility for the governance of the organisation, in line with the organisations 'rules' (commonly known as the Articles of the Association). It is the ultimate decision making body, and therefore legally the Board members are responsible for the way that Merthyr Valleys Homes carries out its business. The role of the Board is to lead, direct, control, scrutinise and challenge the organisation's work. The Board work with the Chief Executive and the Directors, and are responsible for considering strategic plans and reports. The Board are responsible for monitoring the operational performance of the organisation, although the day-to-day management is led by the Chief Executive. Board members are there to ensure that the organisation delivers on its commitments, maximises the resources available, and strives for excellence in all that we do.

Core Responsibilities

The core responsibilities of the Board include:

- Setting and monitoring policy
- Business planning and budget approval
- Receiving auditors and regulators reports
- Authorising legal agreements
- Agreeing staff structure and salaries
- Monitoring financial performance
- Risk management
- Ensuring compliance with equal opportunities

Board members have to ensure that they act in the best interests of the organisation; exercise independent judgement; act in good faith; use reasonable care and act within their powers.

How does the Board operate?

The Board meets monthly, usually in the form of an early evening meeting, although Board away days occasionally replace meetings. The main duties of the Board are conducted through meetings, and they usually last between two and three hours. Board members may also be asked to join a committee or working group, with additional meetings being held throughout the year. Board members may also be invited to a variety of events organised by Merthyr Valleys Homes, or other organisations which relate to the services that we provide, to act as an ambassador for the organisation. They are also being asked to attend training and development sessions to develop their knowledge and skills.

Composition of the Board

The Board is made up of twelve full Board members, and up to three co-optees. The twelve full Board members are an equal mix of:

- a) Tenant Board members
- b) Independent Board members
- c) Local Authority nominated Board members

We may appoint a maximum of three co-optees – these positions can be used to strengthen the Board

This mix of individuals is intended to bring differing approaches, experiences and a range of skills to the Board. Like any group of people, Board members will all have had different experience and have different personalities.

Tenant Board members are elected by tenants and bring many skills from their own backgrounds, experiences of work and voluntary activities, and in addition bring knowledge of local neighbourhoods and communities. They can provide the Board with a customer perspective on many issues, as well as being able to assess how Board decisions may affect customers.

Independent Board members may bring specialised skills, such as legal, financial, construction, housing management and property development.

Local Authority Board members are generally Councillors, and as well as their experiences from work and voluntary activities, they bring the experience they have gained through their Councillor role, as well as knowledge of the Borough.

All of these are vital to the success of the Board.

Martin Evans House
Riverside Court
Avenue De Clichy
Merthyr Tydfil
CF47 8LD

T : 01685 727772 / 0800 085 7843

F : 01685 722480

E : info@mvhomes.org.uk

W: www.mvhomes.org.uk



Other Format

If you would like this document explained, translated or provided in another format such as large print, audio or Braille, please contact 0800 085 7843

Welsh

Os hoffech gael yr wybodaeth hon mewn print bras, Braille, ar dâp neu mewn iaith arall, cysylltwch â ni ar 0800 048 8531

Polish

Jeżeli chcą Państwo uzyskać wyjaśnienie lub tłumaczenie niniejszego dokumenty, lub otrzymać jego kopię w innym formacie, np. dużą czcionką, w formacie audio lub alfabetem Braille'a, prosimy o kontakt z: 0800 048 8589

Portuguese

Se pretender uma explicação ou tradução deste documento ou que o mesmo seja fornecido noutra formato, como letras grandes, áudio ou Braille, por favor contacte: 0800 048 8595