



Cartref



Backing men's mental health

Recently we marked Mental Health Awareness Week by supporting the people and projects making a real difference locally.

Thanks to our contractor ASW Scaffolding, eight men's groups across Neath, Port Talbot and Pontardawe received donations

through our community benefits scheme. From walking football to woodworking, these groups are helping men in our communities feel supported and stay active all while building friendships.

More details on page 4.



VE Day celebrations

We caught up with tenants who marked VE day in style with parties, picnics and music.

More on page 3.



Meet our repairs team

Get to know the repairs team keeping our homes safe, warm and in good condition.

More on page 6.



Summer at home

Our top tips for enjoying the summer but keeping safe and being considerate of your neighbours.

More on page 8.

Children’s mural restored for years to come

We were delighted to play our part in helping to restore the children’s mural in Jersey Park, Briton Ferry, in partnership with the Friends of Jersey Park and our contractors, Hale Construction.

The mural had been created by pupils at Carreg Hir Primary School and depicts the park through the seasons as well as the historic Brunel Bridge. However, wear and tear over the years on the surrounding structure meant it was at risk of damage by the elements.

The restoration followed a plea for help from the volunteer group “Friends of Jersey Park”. Katie is part of our team that helps co-ordinate community benefit donations with our contractors.

“The Friends of Jersey Park asked for our help last year, which was timely as we had just carried out our biodiversity presentation with Carreg Hir, so it felt like a good fit for us to get involved.”

Our contractors Hale Construction answered the call and restored the mural.

Alison Beck, Secretary of the Friends of Jersey Park said:

“The schoolchildren are absolutely thrilled that it’s back in place and it’s going to be ok.”

The Friends group worked with the children to create the original mural and pupils from both local schools spend time with them in the park learning about nature.

Alison explained why this was important:

“If we can create a sense of love for nature and caring for our environment then hopefully, they will take it through to adulthood.

“The sense of pride that the children had when it was first created was immense.

“They did loads of research about



Smiles at the restored mural

biodiversity and about Brunel as there are strong heritage links with Brunel in the park.”

Dionne Herbert from Hale explained why the project was important to them.

“It is important to us at Hale as part of our social outreach and social value commitment to give something back to the community and help people locally.

“It’s great to see the mural back in its former glory.”

Local school children consider careers in housing

Recently, a group of school children visited our head office to gain an insight into the world of work and discover how school can positively impact their future.

As well as hearing the career journeys of colleagues, the pupils from Ysgol Cwm Brombil took part in workshops to equip them with the skills they’ll need when it comes to applying for jobs, including CV writing and interview tips.

They heard more about what we do here, the range of roles and careers available in a housing association, and the skills different jobs require.

One pupil said: “I had no idea there’d be so many opportunities here. I’ve seen the vans driving around Port Talbot but didn’t think about jobs in Finance, HR, and IT.

“We were told that an IT programme designed here is now used in partnership with the police which is very impressive.”

The group spent the morning

meeting members of staff, all with unique career journeys to share, with the aim of inspiring the children to invest in their education as a stepping stone to employment.

Apprentices to senior managers spoke to the Year 10 pupils about their own experiences of school, and the paths they took to get where they are today.

Our apprentice plumber, Anastasia discussed being a female in a traditionally male role, while copper foundation supervisor, Simon, talked about his decision behind a career change and how pursuing an apprenticeship later in life has opened new doors for him.

The group were set a ‘good at vs enjoy matrix’ task, where they were encouraged to explore activities and subjects

they like, dislike, are good at and not so good at.

This allowed the students to identify potential career opportunities, the skills they’d need to initially attain their GCSEs and think about what career they could go into and achieve their dream job.

Our organisation development and learning manager, Kelly hosted the session:


“It was wonderful to have the pupils visit us. They were keen to engage, and it was brilliant to see them take on board the opportunities open to them.

“I really hope the session will benefit them when it comes to finishing their experience at school positively, which in turn will open more opportunities when applying for jobs, whether that’s with Tai Tarian, in the wider housing sector or elsewhere.”



Did you know? - We employ almost 600 people?

In the last year, we created 64 new jobs and welcomed 11 apprentices. We offer a range of exciting career opportunities where you can make a real difference to our communities. Whether you’re a skilled tradesperson, passionate about customer service, or looking to grow your career in housing, we have a wide range of roles. Apply online today: www.taitarian.co.uk/careers



Welcome to the summer edition of Cartref



This issue is full of positive community stories and lots of need-to-know information.

This spring, we marked Mental Health Awareness Week by making donations through our community benefit partnership. We're proud to be playing our part in promoting better mental health with donations totalling £2,000.

We've also continued our commitment to community safety, with more critical bleed kits now available in public spaces across our areas. It's a small step that could make a big difference in an emergency, and we're grateful to our contractors for again

helping to make this happen. You can read more about both of these stories on page 4.

In this edition, you'll also find useful advice on staying safe this summer, whether you're enjoying your garden, hosting a BBQ, or spending time outdoors with family and friends. Speaking of gardens, we're thrilled to announce the return of our much-loved garden competition. We can't wait to see entries of your green spaces blooming with pride once again, all the details on page 10.

It was wonderful to see tenants across our communities come together to celebrate VE Day in

style and hearing their wartime memories, more below.

Finally, behind the scenes, we've been working hard on something really important, our new Corporate Plan. This sets out our ambitions for the next five years and builds on everything we've achieved so far. You can read more on page 5.

We hope you enjoy this edition of Cartref.

Linda
Chief Executive

VE Day remembered

With 2025 marking the 80th anniversary of the end of the Second World War, residents of our Haven schemes pulled out all the stops to make the occasion one to remember.

Across the complexes for tenants over 55, there were parties, picnics, bunting, and music from the 1940s. For those residents who remember the war as youngsters, it also brought back memories. We spoke to husband-and-wife Margaret and David who live in Riverside Court in Pontardawe.

As the music of the war time era was played out, and residents chatted over sandwiches and cakes, they told us about being children in the war era. For Margaret, who was only born in the year before war broke out in 1939, the conflict still had a profound impact:

"I was walking in Brynmill with my father when a house blew up in front of us. After that I didn't speak and I was left with a stammer.

"It's hard to believe 80 years have passed"

David's memories were a reminder that the war had an impact on entire families.

Living as a small child on a farm in Ynysmeudwy he saw four of his elder brothers set off to take part in the conflict. Luckily they all returned home.

We caught up with Dulcie in Pontardawe too. She was also just a little girl at the outbreak of the war. As a child in Alltwen she could only recollect her tiny red gas mask, but two of her older brothers returned from fighting with wounds which would have undoubtedly left a mental mark too.

At Mozart Court in Port Talbot, the community shared their memories and paid their respects to the fallen with a two-minute silence.

Kara, one of our independent living officers said:

"We had the privilege of marking the day alongside some of our tenants who represent the last generation to have lived through World War Two, many of whom were young children at the time.

"They shared their memories, bringing history to life as we reflected together, with songs from the wartime era."

Tenants at Mozart Court embraced the occasion by dressing in wartime-style clothing, including a "land girl" outfit, while one of their veterans was proudly dressed in full uniform, complete with medals, as he prepared to take part in the VE Day parade in Port Talbot.

VE Day celebrations



£2,000 boost for men’s mental health locally

In May, we joined the nationwide conversation for Mental Health Awareness Week, all about promoting the importance of looking after our wellbeing.

As part of our ongoing commitment to help people thrive in our communities, we worked with contractor ASW Scaffolding to support men’s mental health groups across our area. Through our community benefit scheme, built into our contracts, ASW generously donated £250 to eight groups in Neath, Port Talbot and Pontardawe, all chosen for the vital role they play in supporting men’s wellbeing.

Following the death of a well known local scaffolder by suicide, ASW specifically asked for their contribution to go toward men’s groups, recognising the growing need for safe, supportive spaces where men can build friendships, talk, and take part in activities should they wish.

The supported groups included, Men’s Shed Glyncorrwg, Men’s United and Croeso Shed, Pontardawe, Briton Ferry Men’s Shed, The Extraordinary League of Gentlemen, Banwen, Carpentry and Crafts for All, Port Talbot, Briton Ferry Llansawel AFC Walking Football Club and Skewen

Men’s Volunteer Group.

Laurence from Men’s Shed Glyncorrwg was delighted with their donation.

“The donation has already helped us to purchase more materials to provide projects for the community. Recently this involved making wooden Urdd Eisteddfod decorations for local schools in our area, so a huge thanks to you all.”

These groups are all about building positive community connections, companionship, a chance to talk and a place to belong. Lots of them are on social media if you’d like to find out more about how they could support you or a loved one.



If you, or someone you know is struggling with mental health, help is available:

- CALL Helpline – 0800 132 737 (24/7 mental health support in Wales)
- NPT Mind – www.nptmind.org.uk
- Samaritans – 116 123 (free and confidential 24/7)
- C.A.L.L. Mental Health Text Support – Text “Help” to 81066

Community safety continues

As a follow-on to previous updates in Cartref, we’re proud to share that our work to support safer communities continues.

In partnership with the former High Sheriff of West Glamorgan and the Heartbeat Trust, we’ve now installed critical bleed kits at three more locations across Neath Port Talbot. The Ivy Bush Pontardawe, Caewern Stores, Neath and Bryn Bettws Lodge, Port Talbot. These have been funded by our contractors Lightning Solutions. These kits are designed to provide vital

assistance in the event of a traumatic injury, helping to save lives by buying precious time until emergency services arrive.

We’re also pleased to confirm that two additional defibrillators have been funded at Mozart Court and Pant y Fedwen Haven schemes. These life-saving devices were again made possible through our community benefit scheme.

In addition, tenants at Mozart Court recently took part in defibrillator training, helping build confidence

in how to respond if an emergency occurs.

To find out where your nearest defibrillator is, visit the National Defibrillator Network at www.defibfinder.uk, to view a live map showing publicly accessible devices across the UK. Alternatively, you can download the Maps AED app. Sharing this knowledge with friends and family could save a life.

While there is currently no national database for bleed kits, local emergency services



are aware of their locations. In a life-threatening emergency, always call 999 and the call handler will direct you to the nearest available equipment.

Solar power for 850 homes

We’ve made a commitment to make our homes more energy efficient and with solar panels installed on 500 homes last year, there’s more to come, bringing clean, renewable energy to some of our least energy efficient homes.

With support from our dedicated tenant liaison team, work is already under way with three trusted South Wales-based contractors. Over the next 12 months, solar panels will be fitted to just over 850 of our least energy efficient homes, helping reduce bills, cut carbon emissions, and move us closer to our goal of becoming a carbon-neutral organisation.



Using extensive data and home surveys, we’ve carefully selected the homes that will benefit most from this investment. Tenants whose homes have been chosen will receive a letter from us explaining the next steps and how they’ll be supported through the process.

Hayley from Baglan, has already seen the benefits, having been part of our last programme.

“The consultation and information we had beforehand was really thorough and we were excited to see the difference solar panels would make to us. The whole process was done in a day and the cuts to our energy bill have been really helpful, especially in the current climate with rising prices. I would thoroughly recommend solar panels to anyone on the fence, they’ve been a great addition to our home.”

Solar panels offer many long-term advantages, including lower energy bills, reduced reliance on fossil fuels, and a smaller carbon footprint. Plus, once installed, they require little to no maintenance.

There are often questions or concerns about solar panels, but rest assured, the installation is free, low-disruption, and backed by our full support. You won’t pay to maintain the system, and if you move



home, there are no hidden charges.

Not every home is suitable, but we are following a carefully planned ‘Tenant Energy Pathway’ to ensure we deliver this programme fairly and efficiently.

This is a big step toward a greener future for our homes and communities and we’re proud to be leading the way.

For more information, scan here:



Our Corporate Plan 2025 – 2030



We’ve just launched our new Corporate Plan, which sets out what we want to achieve over the next five years. It builds on everything we’ve done so far to create homes where people can thrive, support strong vibrant communities and drive change for a sustainable planet. Our new plan is built around four main themes:

Sustainable Homes

Creating homes where people can thrive

We will:

- Provide and manage great homes that meet the evolving needs of our customers
- Support people in their homes to maintain successful tenancies

Sustainable Planet

Changing our behaviours today for the generations of tomorrow

We will:

- Make bold decisions on our carbon neutrality journey
- Achieve our environmental impact ambitions by working alongside our tenants and communities

Sustainable Communities

Communities achieving their full potential

We will:

- Use our assets, resources and opportunities to benefit local communities in meaningful ways
- Work with our partners to create places in which people are proud to live

Sustainable Business

Working together for a brighter future

We will:

- Operate as a strong, financially sound business, driven by colleagues who feel valued and deliver excellent customer service
- Transform our business by building on brilliant basics to continuously improve

It’s an ambitious plan, but we’re confident we can achieve it. You can watch our Corporate Plan video and read our plan in full, here:





100-people strong, and completing around 32,000 jobs every year, our repairs section is probably one of the busiest teams in Tai Tarian.

Made up of skilled trades men and women, planners, inspectors, team leaders and supervisors, the team are the ones out and about in all weathers making sure your homes are kept in tip-top shape. We met up with some of the

team to find out more about their role:

John: Senior Operations Supervisor

John is one of the most experienced members of the team, starting out as an apprentice bricklayer 33 years ago, before rising through the ranks to become one of two senior supervisors in the team. “It’s a very rewarding, but challenging job. My ultimate responsibility is to ensure that

the team operates as smoothly as possible. With 9,000 homes to look after that can be quite a task.

“To help with this, we’ve divided the borough into four areas, each with two team leaders, an inspector, several trades people and a planner. The size of the area varies. For example, you have Sandfields, which has a large number of properties in quite a small area, but up in the Amman Valley, the area is much bigger, with our properties being more spread out.

“The repairs we deal with can vary greatly, and whilst we will happily fix anything that is a result of fair wear and tear, we do make a charge for any damage that is caused deliberately or recklessly. We’re not a free service - our tenants pay for it through their rent, so it’s not fair to use their money to repair wilful damage.

“As a team, we deal with around 520 jobs a week and we categorise them into 24-hour, seven day, or 28-day jobs, depending on their urgency.

“We have around 1,200 jobs in our system at the moment. We’ll fix around 99% of our emergency calls within a day and, overall, we complete around 90% of all our jobs within the appropriate timeframe. That’s all down to the hard work and dedication of a great team.

“Whilst those numbers are impressive, we’re not resting on our laurels, and we are constantly looking at the way we do things to see how we can improve and offer an even better service to our tenants.”

Leigh: Roofer

“I’m one of four roofers on the team and the work is pretty non-stop.

“In the winter, I deal a lot with weather-related damage.



Investing in our trades of the future

We are committed to investing in the next generation of skilled tradespeople and our latest cohort of apprentices is proof that the future is in good hands.

11 apprentices joined us in September and are learning essential skills across a range of trades, including plumbing, plastering, electrical work, bricklaying, painting and carpentry. They work alongside experienced mentors on repairs in tenants’ homes, with our contractors on new build projects and spend one day a week at our local college, gaining the knowledge and qualifications they need to succeed. Next month they will be joined by five fresh faced recruits joining the team to specialise in carpentry, roofing, plastering and bricklaying.





airs team

During particularly stormy periods, we can be doing around 30 roofing jobs a week. This means we’re climbing up on roofs during some challenging conditions, so it can be tricky. If it’s too dangerous for us to go up on roofs, then we’ll try and fix the problem from inside the loft.”

“I also deal a lot with leaking chimneys. We don’t use them as much these days, as coal fires have all but disappeared. As a result, the bricks become saturated and don’t dry out, which then leads to leakages.

In most cases this means having to remove the chimney completely.”

Tom: Team Leader

“As team leader, I’m in ultimate charge of a job, including the safety of the workers.

“For instance, if Leigh needs to order scaffolding to complete one of his roofing jobs, then it’s down to me to meet with our provider once they’ve installed it and inspect their work. If I’m happy then I’ll sign the paperwork and allow Leigh on to the scaffolding. I’ll also re-inspect it every seven days or after any bad weather.

“As well as overseeing safety, I’m also responsible for liaising with the residents. This is particularly important if we’re dealing with complex jobs such as removing a chimney that is shared by two houses, especially if one of them is privately owned.

“In these cases, we need to get an independent surveyor involved to assess what work needs to be done and then negotiate with the private owner over our plans. This can all take time, so what can seem like a straightforward job can take weeks to resolve.”

Josh and Mike: Inspectors

Trainee inspector, Mike has just joined the inspection team after previously working as a plasterer.

“We have to deal with all sorts



of jobs – baths and showers leaking on to the downstairs ceiling, issues with internal doors or making repairs to the windows.”

Newly qualified inspector, Josh says it’s a busy job:

“When a tenant calls in to request a repair, my job is to pay them a visit to assess exactly what work is required. I’ll work out what materials are required, how many workers will be needed and estimate how long the job will take. I’ll also check for any potential hazards or obstacles that will impact on the work. I’ll pass this information on to our planner, Michelle, who’ll book the job into our system.

Michelle: Planner

Organising so many varied repairs is quite a logistical challenge, and that’s where Michelle and her fellow planners come in, working tirelessly to make sure everything goes as seamlessly as possible.

“My role is like playing a giant game of chess, there

are so many moving parts to planning a job – arranging a date with the tenant, ordering materials, making sure things like scaffolding or skips are delivered in time, reserving time in our trades’ schedule, arranging pre-work safety inspections. If there’s an issue with just one element it can have a knock-on effect on the entire job.

“I have to keep on top of everything whilst being flexible to move things and re-assign our trades to other jobs if there are delays which prevent them starting their original job on the scheduled date.

“In a typical week, I’m personally organising 15 jobs, so making sure they all go as seamlessly as possible can be quite a challenge.”

Whether battling the elements, solving complex logistical challenges, or working closely with you, the repairs team plays a crucial role in ensuring your home remains safe, comfortable and well-maintained all-year round.

Reporting repairs

If you find an issue in your home, and you believe we are responsible for repairing it, please report it as soon as you can. It’s easy to report non-urgent repairs via our website. Just add the details of the repair, tell us when you are available and one of our customer service team will assess if it’s our responsibility and get back to you to book in to carry out the job.

If your repair is an emergency, such as an immediate danger or health hazard, please call us to report this as soon as possible. When you get in touch, our team will ask several questions to allocate your repair into one of the

following categories:

Emergency repair - endeavour to complete within 24 working hours

Urgent repair - to be attended to within seven working days

Non-emergency - timescale dependant on the nature of the work and we will then book an appointment for the job to be carried out.

We may advise you to carry out simple repairs to your property yourself such as replacing sink/basin plugs or changing light bulbs and can assist over the phone with this.



Our contact centre is open from 8am-6pm Monday to Friday and our out-of-hours service is available if you need to report an emergency repair outside of these hours by calling the same number: 0300 777 3000.

If you are unable to call us or use our website, you can email repairs@taitarian.co.uk but this should only be used for non-urgent repairs only.

Making the most of summer at home

Summer is the perfect time to enjoy your garden, fire up the BBQ and spend time outdoors with family and friends.

As we make the most of the longer days and good weather, it's also important to be considerate of neighbours and our shared spaces. A little courtesy goes a long way in helping everyone enjoy the summer months and here are some top tips from us.

Enjoying the outdoors

If you're spending more time in your garden or inviting people over:

- Give your neighbours a quick heads-up if you're planning a gathering.
- Keep music at a reasonable level, especially in the evening.
- Be aware of smoke and noise that might drift into nearby homes.
- Keep your outdoor space clean and tidy. Keep a track of bin day and dispose of your rubbish properly.
- Be mindful of the time, if it's getting late and you're still enjoying your outdoor space, be aware that you could be disturbing your neighbours.

Enjoying your outdoor space is also an opportunity to get to know your neighbours, just a smile or a wave can help build community spirit.

Summer naturally brings more activity and noises so it's important to expect this and respond with understanding. Keep your cool if a neighbour issue arises and get in touch if you need our support.

BBQs used safely

Barbecues are a summer favourite, but they can be risky if not used properly. Mid and West Wales Fire Service have some great advice that they have shared with us:

- Only use BBQs outdoors, never indoors or on balconies.
- Place your BBQ on a flat, stable surface away from sheds, trees, fences or anything else that could catch fire, including grass.
- Never leave a BBQ unattended.
- Keep children, pets, and flammable materials well away.
- For gas BBQs, check your connections. If you smell gas, or suspect a leak, don't light it.



- Let charcoal cool completely before disposing, never put hot coals in the bin.

Outdoor lighting looks lovely but must be used safely:

- Never leave candles or fire pits unattended.
- Always place them on a fire-resistant, stable surface.
- Avoid using flammable liquids, use firelighters or kindling instead.
- Think about the smoke - what's relaxing for you might be bothersome for your neighbours.

Respecting shared spaces

Communal areas, like stairwells and walkways, must be kept clear. Don't leave

BBQs, furniture, or personal belongings where they could block escape routes or create fire risks. These spaces should never be used for cooking or lighting candles.

A quick reminder of your responsibilities:

- Keep shared areas clear and safe.
- Be respectful and considerate to your neighbours.
- Don't store flammable materials near your home.
- Treat neighbours, staff, and communal property with respect.

Let's look out for each other as neighbours and enjoy summer.

Contract Talk - access to your home

Providing access is an important part of your contract.

There are lots of reasons why we may need access to your home. It could be to carry out essential work that we've identified or that you've reported to us, carry out annual gas safety checks, surveys which helps inform future work and understand your property, or sometimes, we just want to check in and see how you're doing.



Your occupation contract requires you to allow access when given reasonable notice. We'll always aim to give you at least 24 hours in most cases, and seven days for certain legal inspections. In an emergency, we may enter without notice to protect you, others, or your home.

We appreciate that life is busy but letting us in is important to ensure your property is kept in a good, safe condition. Missed appointments cost time and

money and delay important work. If you repeatedly do not provide access for essential works or legal safety checks this is a breach of your contract and may lead to further action.

However, we can be flexible. If the times for appointments don't suit or something crops up last minute, please get in touch - we're happy to try to rearrange and avoid a wasted journey.

Please remember: If we're servicing your heating, make sure there's enough gas credit or solid fuel. If not, we may not be able to complete the check.

With over 9,000 homes to look after, keeping to appointment times helps our staff work more efficiently and ensures your home stays in good working order and you and your family safe.

Remembering bin day

Missing your bin day makes things stressful, especially in the summer months when rubbish can attract flies and rodents.

The council have a handy bin day finder tool on their website where you can also sign up for a myNPT account to receive an email reminder before your bin collection day. Don't forget to recycle as much as you can and store your rubbish in bins and bags provided. There is no limit on the number of recycling bags you can put out each week, you can order more from the council website. Check your bin collection day here:



New homes update

With so many people in desperate need of a home, we continue to work with the local council to support those most in need, whilst also making homes available on our Homes by Choice bidding system.

At County Flats, Sandfields work on Flint and Morgannwg House is ongoing, with completion of the entire site expected by late summer. At Eagle House in Port Talbot town centre, work continues with 18 apartments expected to be ready for let by late autumn. Work is continuing in Cwmavon at Heol Crwys, where we should see the first stage of the new development being completed by late summer, with more to follow in early 2026.



In Cimla, Bluefield Land have been appointed as the contractor to build 22 new homes on the former Tudor Inn site. Work is ongoing to satisfy pre-start conditions with construction expected to begin in the Autumn. In recent months, consultation with residents regarding a proposal for a development of 22 homes on land at Brynbryddan, Cwmavon has taken place. Details of

what is being proposed along with answers to some common questions can be found here:



We are also working on the design and planning phases for 31 properties in Croeserw and 100 properties in Sandfields. All our new homes will be energy efficient and environmentally friendly.

Knowing you better

We’re always working to make sure our services meet the needs of the people who matter most – you, our tenants.



Later this year, we’ll be reaching out to get to know you better. This means understanding more about you as individuals, your needs, and how we can support you more if we need to. For example, some tenants may live with disabilities, be neurodivergent (such as having autism or ADHD), or face other day-to-day challenges. By finding out more about these experiences, we can look at how our services might need to adapt. That could mean offering different kinds of support, making adjustments, or communicating in more accessible ways. This work is all part of our ongoing

commitment to Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (ED&I). We want everyone who lives in our homes to feel respected, safe, and supported. Knowing you better will help us build stronger relationships and better communities. Our staff have recently set up a neurodiversity group, with training planned in the coming months to help all colleagues better understand the natural diversity in human brains. This is just the beginning. Our ED&I strategy is in development and will be available in the publications section of our website soon.

News in brief

- 1. In June, the “making a home for diversity” message was heard loud and clear as we joined other Welsh housing associations and the inclusivity charity Tai Pawb for a special Pride event in Cardiff. Our attendance showed our commitment to equality, diversity, and inclusivity and we were proud to be part of the event.
- 2. We want to support our former service men and women and their families as much as we can and have recently been awarded Bronze status in the Armed Forces Covenant employer recognition scheme. This means we support the employment of veterans and their families, including recognition of military skills in our recruitment process.



A look back at 2024/25

Our annual review takes a look back at the last financial year, including our highlights, performance and more on our Corporate Plan. Take a look here:



Enter our 2025 garden competition

Do you have a glorious garden that you are proud of? Then why not enter this year’s garden competition for your chance to win a £50 voucher for Zoar’s Ark Garden Centre.

We’re celebrating all kinds of green spaces with three exciting categories:

Best grow your own

Best wildlife garden

Best overall garden

There will also be a special award for the best Haven Housing garden.

Whether it’s full of flowers, fruit and veg or a peaceful place to relax,

if you’re proud of your outdoor space, we’d love to see it.

Roxanne Collins from our community team said:

“We’re always blown away by the creativity and passion our tenants show through their gardens. Don’t be shy, if you’ve put time and love into your garden, please get your entries in.

“We always get such a brilliant response and it’s inspiring to see how people have transformed their outdoor spaces. If you’re not a gardener yourself but know a tenant who is, please encourage them to take part, or nominate them.”

To enter, just send photos of your garden to community@taitarian.co.uk by Friday 15th August. Good luck and happy gardening!



Creating sustainable spaces where nature can thrive

Over the past few years, we’ve been managing our green spaces differently, mowing less often and dedicating more areas to support local wildlife.

This nature friendly approach is really paying off, with more species of plants and wildflowers returning to our land than we’ve seen in years.

It’s a small change that’s having a big impact not just for us, but for others too. Our commitment to boosting biodiversity has even encouraged other housing associations to follow suit.

But there’s more to it than just mowing less. Our team has been busy planting a variety of native shrubs and plants across our communities, all carefully selected to suit the unique conditions of each location, from soil type to sunlight levels. These choices not only ensure the plants thrive, but bring colour to the community, support pollinators, and help

improve biodiversity in a sustainable way.

In addition to community planting, the team have visited Croeserw Primary School to enhance their outdoor space. More on that partnership in the next Cartref.

Community pride is blooming too. In Port Talbot, we’ve seen more local litter picks taking place, with us joining forces with Keep Wales Tidy, local residents, local councillors and even caped crusader Captain Beany. We have also linked up with the Neath Port Talbot Council on recycling roadshows, giving tenants the knowledge of how and what to recycle and how to get additional supplies to make life easier.



Community Challenge winners announced



Following a fantastic response to our latest Community Challenge, we’re excited to reveal the two winning projects that will benefit from a summer transformation.

Over the coming months, we’ll be teaming up with our contractors to deliver improvements at Taibach Welcome Garden and Neath Methodist Church. From painting and planting to essential repairs, both sites will receive a much-needed boost to help create more welcoming community spaces.

We’re also proud to share that £10,000 of additional funding has been secured to support the brilliant work of Pantry Food Bank in Pontardawe. Improvement works are set to be carried out by one of our trusted contractors later this year.

Think your favourite local facility could benefit from the next round? Keep an eye out, entries for the next Community Challenge will open in early 2026.

Steph's top tips

The summer holidays are nearly upon us and Neath Port Talbot is full of wonderful places to explore without breaking the bank. Whether you're hiking through forests, discovering local history, or enjoying a picnic in the park, there's something for every family to enjoy this summer.

Explore the great outdoors:

1. Gnoll Country Park (Neath)

A beautiful 200-acre park featuring lakeside and woodland walks, restored formal cascades, a grotto, and an adventure playground. A free junior park run takes place every Sunday. Lots of activities tend to take place over the summer offering something for children of all ages.

2. Afan Forest Park (Afan Valley)

Ideal for hiking and biking, this expansive forest park offers trails suitable for all ages. The Discovery Centre provides an adventure play area and information about local wildlife. The 'Rheilffordd Way' offers a gently sloping, wide and flat bike path trail in the Afan Forest Park which takes an average of three hours to cycle.



3. Margam Park

Margam Park is especially good for families. There's plenty to keep even the most energetic kids busy all day. Children aged 10 and under will love the fairytale village with its miniature Tudor houses and adventure castle.

4. The Brecon Beacons Waterfall Country

Accessible by bus and situated on the border of Neath Port Talbot, just beyond Glynneath in Pontneddfechan. This trail leads you to visit several magnificent waterfalls, including Sgwd yr Eira, famous for being able to walk behind it.

5. Aberavon Beach

Enjoy one of Wales' longest beaches, perfect for swimming, surfing and beach games. The promenade offers cafes, splash park and new adventure playground to enjoy.

Tips for budget friendly days out:

- Pack a picnic, save on food costs by bringing your own snacks and meals. In previous holidays, supermarkets offering kids to eat for free or for £1



- have also offered a takeaway packed lunch option. Worth checking!
- You could also download the Too Good to Go app where local restaurants, cafes, bakeries and supermarkets sell surplus food at a discount.
- Check local listings, websites like Visit Wales and Neath Port Talbot Council (what's on guide) often list free events and activities. We also share lots of local events on our Facebook page.
- Use public transport. Under 5's travel free with First Cymru and kids under 16 can go free on some Transport for Wales trains. Just check before you travel.
- Set a budget, decide in advance how much you're willing to spend on extras like ice creams or souvenirs and stick to it. Telling the kids in advance also avoids nags for extras.



Supporting our tenants

Our financial inclusion team has helped tenants claim an incredible £5.65 million in additional benefits in the last year through 2,746 successful applications.

All were payments people were entitled to because of

their personal circumstances, but without our support and guidance, the money would have gone unclaimed.

A big part of this has been around supporting people to claim Pension Credit. Last autumn we raised awareness

of changes to the benefit, with our officer Steph visiting our Haven schemes to run advice sessions during coffee mornings, making it easier for people to get the help they need in a relaxed and familiar setting.

Getting involved, the latest

Since late last year, we've been visiting communities across Neath Port Talbot, talking to tenants. From community halls and local libraries to rugby clubs and family fun days, we've met hundreds of you, keen to share your views and help us shape the future of our services.

Since the last Cartref we have held more Tenant Talks, this time in Baglan,

Crynant and Waunceirch.

All these sessions have been key to how we're shaping our future tenant involvement opportunities and we're nearly ready to share what that looks like.

We'll be revealing our brand-new tenant involvement offer at our Annual General Meeting on 22nd July. Afterwards, everyone who has shown an interest in getting involved will be

contacted directly to hear more about our plans going forward. From sharing feedback and influencing services to co-designing projects, there will be something to suit everyone.

If you couldn't attend one of the sessions but want to have your say, get in touch with Katie our tenant engagement officer on **01639 507035** or email **tenantvoice@taitarian.co.uk**.





By Love Food Hate Waste

One pot chicken noodles

A speedy supper for one, made in one bowl, that is delicious and saves on washing up!



Serves:
1



Prep/Cook time:
10-20 mins

Ingredients

- 55g instant rice noodles
 - 1 reduced salt chicken stock cube, crumbled and added to 250ml boiling water in a jug and stirred
 - 1 skinless cooked chicken breast, shredded
 - 25g frozen peas
- 1 small carrot, thinly sliced, no need to peel
 - ½ small red pepper, sliced
 - 1 spring onion, shredded
 - 1 tsp cornflour
 - 2 tsp reduced salt soy sauce
 - ¼ tsp Chinese five spice

Recipe

1. Remember to defrost your meat. Defrost your meat in the fridge and use within 24 hours, or in a microwave on ‘defrost’ directly before use. This recipe works perfectly with frozen meat. Check what you have in your freezer and defrost meat thoroughly before cooking.

2. Place the noodles in an individual microwavable soup bowl or large mug then pour hot stock over the noodles and leave for 3 minutes.

3. Add the chicken, carrot, peas, red pepper and spring onion. In a small bowl mix the cornflour, light soy sauce, 5-spice and 1 tbsp cold water. Pour the cornflour mixture over the noodles then mix everything together ensuring that the vegetables are evenly distributed throughout the bowl.

4. Cover the bowl with cling film and microwave on high for 2 minutes, stirring halfway through cooking, until the chicken is piping hot. Leave to stand for 1 minute before serving.
- Store in:** Airtight container

Time: Fridge for 2 days

Where to store: Fridge

Reheat: Oven or microwave until piping hot. Reheat only once.

Struggling with the cost of food? Our Financial Inclusion team can issue food bank vouchers. Get in touch with them on **01639 315000**.

Tea break challenge

How to play?

Within the rows and columns are 9 “squares” (made up of 3 x 3 spaces). Each row, column and square needs to be filled out with the numbers 1-9, but these can only be used once.

		2	4	1				
	8	5	7	6				9
3	7		9					
4				5			3	
	1			9	6			5
			2	8	4	1		
		7	5					3
			6					
		9			1	2		7


Give it a go!


Some eagled eyed tea break challenge fans will have noticed that Spring Cartref’s Sudoku was impossible! As the number 4 was in the middle square, all the spaces above couldn’t contain a number 4, for the game to be completed. Apologies for any inconvenience caused!

Win £50 by going green

If you fancy receiving future editions of Cartref via email instead of post, please let us know by emailing media@taitarian.co.uk. All those that get in touch before 15th August will be entered into a prize draw with the chance to win a **£50 shopping voucher**. Congratulations to Emma from Margam, the winner from our winter edition.



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0300 777 0000
(General enquiries)
- 

0300 777 3000
(Report a repair – only emergency repairs can be dealt with outside of office hours.)



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