



# Cartref



## Christmas cheer

Community donations aplenty in the run up to Christmas.

Find out more on page 2.



## Meet the team

We caught up with our new digital team to find out how they are getting more tenants online.

More on page 5.



## All you need to know about rent

How we set it, where your money goes and who can help if you are worried.

More on page 7.

# New year, new voice

## Could you be the difference?

After over a year of planning and listening to tenants, we're launching Tenant Voice – your opportunity to have your say on the services that matter most.

Whether it's repairs, your community, or how we communicate, there's a group for you. By joining, you'll gain rewards, training, and the chance to influence positive change for your home and community.

Start 2026 by making a real impact. Find out more on page 6.



# Christmas cheer returns

In the run-up to Christmas, we were busy co-ordinating hundreds of festive donations thanks to the generosity of our contractors and colleagues. From Christmas Day dinners and gifts to hampers, afternoon teas, food donations, and hundreds of selection boxes, biscuits, mince pies, and gift vouchers – all helped spread Christmas cheer at a difficult time for many.

This year, all 24 foodbanks in the borough received selection boxes worth a total of £1,550, and 27 community groups were supported with donations totalling £6,650. These included 112 gifts for young carers, 22 gifts for care home residents, and Christmas Day dinners for veterans.

Our popular Christmas dinner drop was warmly received by tenants once again. Staff were out in force on Christmas Eve, delivering over 130 dinners to ensure those who might have missed out could enjoy a festive meal on Christmas Day.

Roxanne from our customer and community team said:

“Our community benefit donations happen throughout the year, but at Christmas we really ramp things up. We work closely with staff, partners, and community leaders to identify those in need and help as many people as possible. Foodbanks and community groups benefited from gifts and donations worth thousands of pounds, and our Christmas dinner drop was as popular as ever. We’re thrilled these small gestures have made such a difference again this year.”



## £10k boost improves foodbank

A Pontardawe foodbank has been given a new lease of life thanks to a £10,000 refurbishment to make the facility safer, warmer, and more welcoming for those who need it most.

We secured funding from Community Foundation Wales through the Welsh Procurement Alliance fund and appointed contractor PBM to carry out the work at PANTRY foodbank.

The improvements include repairing a leaking roof, restoring damaged ceilings, and installing a new water heater to improve kitchen facilities. Electric heaters have also been added to help keep the vast space warm during the colder months.



Outside, the side entrance has been made safer with new path slabs to remove slip hazards, while overgrown pathways leading to the foodbank have been cleared to improve access. Inside, plaster repairs and a fresh coat of paint have brightened the foodbank room, with condensation issues tackled with a new ventilation fan.

The upgrades come at a crucial time as demand for foodbank services continues to rise. PANTRY foodbank is open twice a week and supported over 2,000 adults and children last year, providing essential food parcels and a lifeline for those struggling with the cost of living.

Colin, chair of PANTRY, expressed his gratitude, saying:

“Going into the colder, darker months, these upgrades are really welcome. The space is so vast it gets very cold, the leaking roof had left us with

damp ceilings and walls and the footpaths outside were dangerously slippery in the wet weather. This funding has made a big difference and allows us to offer a safer, warmer environment not just for those who rely on us, but our volunteers too.”

This is the third time Tai Tarian has secured funding from the Welsh Procurement Alliance to support local community groups. Previous projects have included improvements at Graig Trebanos Community Hub & Garden and the creation of a community garden at Canolfan Maerdy in Gwaun Cae Gurwen, reinforcing our commitment to making a positive difference to our communities. Funding has already been sourced for our next community project, with improvement work already underway at Neath Mind. More on that in the next Cartref.

## Dial 159 to beat bank fraud

If you get a suspicious call about your bank account, hang up and dial 159. This national fraud hotline connects you directly to your bank’s fraud team, safely and securely.



Most major UK banks are part of the scheme, and the number is easy to remember as 159 runs diagonally across your phone keypad.

Since its launch, 159 has already helped protect thousands of people from scams. Keep it handy, it could save you from fraud.

PANTRY Foodbank is an independent provider of essential support to local families and individuals facing hardship and is run entirely by a hardworking team of volunteers. The foodbank relies heavily on food and monetary donations from the community to help feed those in need.

Donations of tinned goods, pasta, tea, coffee, long life milk and toiletries are always needed. A full and up to date list of urgent requirements can be found on the PANTRY website [www.pantryfoodbank.org](http://www.pantryfoodbank.org) or scan the QR code here.



# Welcome from Linda

Happy New Year to you all.

We’re starting 2026 with a big focus on tenant voice. Over the last few months, tenant involvement has made a difference in things like rent setting and repairs workshops, and we need to do more of it.

Tenant Voice groups give you a real opportunity to influence our services and make your voice heard. It’s an important step forward, and we can’t wait to get started. All the details on page 6.

You’ll also have received your rent booklet recently. It explains

what rent (and any service charges) you’ll pay from April. These charges were set after lots of conversations with TPAS Cymru, tenants, and understanding feedback from a survey on rent sent to all of you.

Our charges are set in line with Welsh Government guidelines and our rent principles. You can find out more on page 7.

In this edition of Cartref, we caught up with a brand-new team tasked with getting more tenants online, you can hear from Hannah and Emma on page 5. Plus, Ana helps us

understand the autumn budget and shares her money advice to recover from the expense of Christmas, page 9.

*Linda Whitaker*  
Chief Executive

If you see a QR code in Cartref, grab your smart phone, open your camera and hover over the code. This will bring up the website page you need. Just tap to open. If you don’t have a smart phone, you can visit our website and use the search bar to find info on the topic. [www.taitarian.co.uk](http://www.taitarian.co.uk)



## Darting dinosaurs hit the bullseye!

In our spring Cartref we shared how darts fever had gripped some of our Haven schemes as residents took to the oche for some friendly competition against each other.

Now, after months of keenly fought matches, the inaugural winners of the Haven darts league have been crowned. Despite the Michaelstone Court Muppets and Mozart Court Marauders pushing them all the way, it was the Gwyn Court Dinosaurs from Port Talbot who came out on top.

Whilst the matches themselves have been good fun with plenty of laughs, there’s a serious side to the darts as Haven’s independent living officer, Kirk, who came up with the idea, explains:

“The primary aim was simply to get people together, especially those who wouldn’t come to our usual activities like coffee mornings or bingo sessions, and that has certainly happened. We’re seeing residents taking part and socialising who previously didn’t get involved and kept themselves to themselves, and that is very pleasing to see.

“Darts is a very accessible sport, and anyone can give it a go (although some are better than others!), but we make adaptations by allowing less mobile tenants to stand a bit closer to the board or to hold on to a chair whilst they throw. Whatever it takes to get people taking part.

“It’s been great to see how much the residents themselves have bought into the competition, coming up with team names, buying themselves shirts, and even putting on post-match buffets to make them into a real social occasion. There’s definitely a buzz about the place on match days.”

Such is the popularity of the matches, the Haven darts league is set to expand this year with Haven schemes in Neath, Pontardawe and Cwmgor hoping to join in with the fun. Watch out, Luke Littler!



## Watching out for DMC this winter

Winter is when we tend to see a rise in damp, mould or condensation (DMC) in our homes.



If this is something you are worried about, please get in touch with our contact centre on 0300 777 3000 or email [repairs@taitarian.co.uk](mailto:repairs@taitarian.co.uk).

For advice on spotting the signs of damp, mould or condensation, visit our website:



Apprentice opportunities for 16+ coming later this year. More in the next Cartref.



New Time to Thrive programme now open

Time to Thrive grants programme is now live and ready to support community projects that make a real difference to lives locally.

We want to support projects that bring people together, improve wellbeing, and create opportunities for everyone.

It's all about helping local groups make an even bigger impact in their communities.

Who can apply?

If you're part of a group or organisation with big ideas, you may be eligible.

Applications are open to:

- Constituted groups
- Registered charities
- Community interest companies
- Voluntary or not-for-profit groups
- Social enterprises

Funding available

We're offering grants of up to £10,000 to help bring your ideas to life.

So if you've got a great idea, we'd love to help you make it happen!



What can be funded?

Our funding priorities align with the Future Generations Act Wales, focusing on projects that create lasting benefits for our communities.

Examples include:

- Community growing and food sustainability
- Mental health and emotional wellbeing

- Social inclusion initiatives
- Place-making and community improvements
- Arts, culture, and creativity
- Sports, recreation, and active participation

If a good cause springs to mind, please encourage them to apply for our funding. All the details here:



Schools get a tech boost

Secondary schools across Neath Port Talbot have received a donation of 130 laptops guaranteed to make a real difference to students both at home and in the classroom.

Nathan Lawrence, Head of IT at Ysgol Bro Dur in Port Talbot, explained how the 14 laptops they received will be put to good use:

"The pupils will be using these creatively both for design in Art and Media and for 3D and 2D design in Design Technology.

We will also be using them for coding and other computing work to supplement the IT timetable."

Other schools have similar plans. Ysgol Bae Baglan, will be using the laptops to support students who don't have access to devices at home. Meanwhile, Ysgol Cwm Brombil will place theirs in the school hub, where students and families in need can access technology, food, and other essentials during tough times.

The donation, worth £19,500, is a huge boost at a time when school budgets are under increasing pressure so we are proud to have played our part.



2026 COMMUNITY CHALLENGE COMING SOON – MORE IN THE NEXT CARTREF

Thinking about quitting smoking?

Whether you want to go it alone or get a little extra support, Help Me Quit is the free NHS stop smoking service for Wales, offering practical, evidence-based help to make quitting easier.

No pressure – just support when you want it!

Thousands of people have already taken the first step with Help Me Quit. If you'd like to explore your options, visit [helpmequit.wales](http://helpmequit.wales), call 0800 085 2219, or text HMQ to 80818.



Digital Connections – helping tenants get online

Banking, shopping, keeping in touch with friends and family – so much of what we do these days happens online. But for some, getting connected is not as easy, with many barriers in their way.

Now, thanks to a brand-new initiative, we have a team on hand to help get you connected.

We caught up with Hannah and Emma from the team at their recent session at one of our Haven schemes in the Amman Valley.

Hannah starts our chat by giving a quick overview of what the new initiative is all about:

"Our Digital Connections project is funded by the Welsh Government and is all about boosting the digital confidence of our tenants. It aims to help them overcome any obstacles that prevent them getting online.

"It's our job to then meet with them to understand what they're struggling with and provide them with tailored advice and support. Maybe they don't have a suitable device, have no Wi-Fi or data connection or simply don't know what to click or press once they're online. Whatever their issue is then we'll try our best to help them."

Emma explains why this

initiative is needed:

"We know that 41% of social housing tenants in Wales don't use the internet. That may be due to lack of support and confidence, worry about scams, lack of trust in online services or the financial costs of buying a device or a broadband connection."

"What this project aims to do is address some of those concerns and work with tenants to get them online and improve their access to vital services such as healthcare, job applications or for them to keep in touch with family and friends."

The project is still in its infancy, and the team are out and about, meeting tenants and getting an idea of what help is required, as Hannah explains:

"The online access of the people we meet varies enormously. Some have absolutely no idea how to get connected, whilst some are online to a certain extent. For instance, they're comfortable using a laptop to send an email or buy something online but struggle with using their phone for other tasks. Whatever they struggle with, we'll try and help them succeed."

One of the residents Emma was helping during our visit was Bryn. He said:



"I'm fairly comfortable using my laptop to get online, but I was having issues with my phone. I've just bought tickets to a concert in Cardiff and didn't know how to download them to my phone so I could show them on the door to get in. Emma has now shown me how to download and use a digital wallet and how to safely store my tickets in there. I'm very grateful to her for her help."

Also at the session was Sonia, who was receiving help from Hannah to access her e-mails. She said:

"I think this is a great initiative. So much stuff you do these days is online, so it's important that we're all as clued up as we can be. Hannah and Emma were lovely and so helpful,

I'd encourage anyone who needs a bit of help to get in touch with them."

Emma stressed that the scheme is open to anyone in a Tai Tarian household:

"Being connected is more important than ever. So many services are online these days, so if a tenant needs help with their banking, online applications or anything else then I'd encourage them to get in touch with us. Whatever their age or personal circumstances we are here to help them with their online needs."

If you, or someone you know needs a bit of extra help to get online, then give Hannah or Emma a call on 01639 506694 / 01639 506026.





# Start the new year by making a difference!

## This month marks the launch of something exciting: Tenant Voice.

For over a year, we've been working closely with tenants, listening to ideas, and shaping new opportunities to give you the power to influence decisions, share your views, and help us improve.

Katie, our tenant engagement officer, said:

"We've listened to tenants every step of the way. Now, we're offering something built around your interests and a genuine chance to influence how we work together."

### Your groups, your choice

Join one of six Tenant Voice groups, each focusing on a key area of our work:

### Communications and Digital

Help influence new and existing tenant communications from Cartref to new technology like a tenant portal.

### Communities and Homes

From having your say on building new homes – and improving existing ones – to how we can support our communities. Your views will help us support and sustain thriving communities.

### Repairs

Improving our repairs service together, making sure it works for you.

### Environment and Sustainability

Helping us become greener with involvement in our approach to things like sustainability, the Welsh Housing Quality Standard (WHQS23) and biodiversity.

### Value for Money

Do we spend smart? Make sure our services are efficient and charged fairly, with standards in place.

### Scrutiny

Taking a wider look at how we're doing, focusing on a wide range of different topics and service areas. How can we do better?

### What's the commitment?

A minimum of two sessions per year. These will be community based at a time that works for you.

### Why join?

- Share your views in a supportive setting
- Shape decisions that affect your home and community
- Receive a £20 shopping voucher for each session
- Travel and childcare costs covered\*
- Get expert training from organisations like TPAS Cymru

### How to find out more?

Email [tenantvoice@taitarian.co.uk](mailto:tenantvoice@taitarian.co.uk) or call 0300 777 0000.

Once you get in touch we'll have a quick chat about your interests and match you with the right group.

Find out more by scanning the QR code.



Tenant Voice

\*Childcare support is available on a case-by-case basis (registered providers only)

# Tenants lead the way for repairs workshops

In the autumn, we held a five-part co-design journey with 20 tenants, working together to create a more responsive and trusted repairs service. Tenants made a huge impact throughout the process, and their insights have been invaluable.



The project; repairing repairs, repairing trust, brought together teams from Tai Tarian and tenants, to co-produce meaningful change. The workshops were designed to be reflective and engaging, drawing on tenants' lived experiences and a shared commitment to make things better.

Over the five workshops, tenants and staff explored what "home" means, shared experiences of emergency repairs, and worked together on expectations around fairness, communication, and quality standards. The final session brought everything together with discussions, scenario evaluations, and creative elements like a song reflecting tenants' voices.

We've already made some quick improvements based on tenant feedback – like reducing the number of messages on our phone lines so it's quicker to report a repair. Plus, in this edition of Cartref, you'll find an article on page 8 explaining the different teams who can carry out repairs, maintenance, and home improvements at your home.

Other next steps include finalising a revised repairs policy and creating a tenant repairs charter in song form.

Tenants will meet again this month to share progress and celebrate their contribution.

Carol from Cwmafan reflected on being part of the workshops:

"The sessions were good, entertaining and well presented. It was great to see Tai Tarian engaging and collaborating with tenants, and I appreciated that they listened and took on board what we had to say."

Anthony from Pontardawe also enjoyed the experience:

"I've found the sessions educational, discovering what Tai Tarian do day-to-day. I've not always had good experiences, so I wanted to raise issues and help improve the service. In fairness, it wasn't easy for staff to hear some of it, but they listened and took it on board."

# Understanding rent and service charges: what you need to know

Recently you will have received a booklet explaining your rent and, if applicable, any service charges you'll need to pay from April.

As a community landlord, we follow Welsh Government's new 10-year guidance on how rents are set.

The 10-year rent settlement was introduced last year to make sure housing associations have enough money to maintain homes, provide services, and invest in communities. After receiving the guidance, we work out what this means in pounds and

pence for all tenants to make sure rents remain affordable.

Speaking to tenants about this has been key. Over the summer, we held a roadshow of workshops and face-to-face sessions, worked with TPAS Cymru, and gathered over 900 responses to our rent survey.

These conversations have been invaluable, and we thank everyone who had their say.

A major part of this process has been reviewing our affordability principles, which were developed with tenants – including a new one for Haven and supported housing.



Remember, if you claim Universal Credit you will only be able to update your journal from the 1st April with your new rent amount. Failure to do so could mean you are underpaid.

# Contract Talk



## Paying rent and service charges, what your contract says.

Your rent, and any applicable service charges are charged weekly.

## What are service charges?

Some tenants pay extra for services such as grass cutting, communal cleaning, or maintaining fire safety systems. These are called service charges. If they apply to you, the details will be listed in the key matters section of your contract.

## Notice of changes:

We will always give you at least two months' written notice of any new or increased charges and the date they start. This information is included in your rent booklet which you would have received recently.

## Joint contract-holders:

If you become a joint contract-holder, you take on all the rights and responsibilities under the contract,

including paying rent and service charges from the day this happens.

## Ways to pay your rent

- **Direct Debit** – The easiest and most secure way to pay. Choose weekly, fortnightly, 4-weekly, or monthly payments.
- **Online or App** – Pay anytime using the Allpay app or online with your payment card.
- **By Phone** – Call us on 0300 777 0000 (Mon–Fri, 8:30am–5pm) or use the Allpay automated line on 0330 041 6497 (available 24/7).
- **Local Shops or Post Office** – Look for the PayPoint symbol.

## Need help?

If you're struggling to pay, please contact us straight away. Contact details are outlined in the article on rent above.

## Where does my money go?

Based on each £100 received, we spend...



These are:

- **Principle 1:** We will assess our rents against market rents, and the rents charged by other housing associations in the locality, and agree a proposal based upon the results.
- **Principle 2:** Our rents will be affordable in line with the Living Rent Model for households with tenants who earn a low wage.
- **Principle 3:** Our rents will take into consideration the number of bedrooms within the property.
- **Principle 4:** We will set out what tenants will receive for service charges, and will ensure the amount is fair, reasonable, and provides value for money.

- **Principle 5:** Rent and service charges for Haven and supported housing will be set fairly, taking account of the distinctive services and facilities provided, the nature of the buildings, and the need to safeguard affordability for tenants.

## Get in touch:

If you're worried about paying your rent, please contact us as soon as possible. Whether you're in work or claiming benefits, there may be help available. Contact details for your designated rent officer and housing officer are included on page 3 of your rent booklet or call us on 0300 777 0000 for further advice.



# Latest on new homes

We have been awarded £1 million from the Veterans’ Capital Housing Fund to build six new homes for veterans in Port Talbot. This funding is part of a wider £4.5 million investment across the UK to deliver 45 new homes and refurbishments for veterans and their families, under the UK Government’s £20 million “Homes for Heroes” initiative.

The scheme will provide six self-contained homes with shared communal areas, designed to promote independence while encouraging peer support and reducing social isolation. Delivered in partnership with Bulldogs Boxing & Community Activities and Cwmpas, the project will combine housing with wellbeing services, community-led approaches, and expert guidance. Planning approval is anticipated by this summer with homes expected to be completed by autumn 2027.

Tai Tarian Chief Executive Linda Whittaker said: “Supporting veterans has been a priority for us over the past few years, and this development marks a significant step forward in that journey. This funding allows us to take that commitment even further with the building of six new homes and the opportunity to create new communities where veterans can thrive.”

### In progress

Elsewhere at County Flats 1, all residents are now happily settled in, marking

the completion of a scheme that has brought new life to the area. Plans for County Flats 2 are progressing, with a full planning submission expected in the spring.

At Heol Crwys, Cwmavon, the first four Jiwibili flats have just welcomed new residents, with a further 21 homes expected to be ready between February and April. In total, the development will deliver 43 new homes, including one- and two-bedroom bungalows and one-bedroom apartments, helping to meet local housing need. The site is scheduled for completion by late winter,

with phased handovers continuing across the seasons.

Residents have started moving into Eagle House, Port Talbot made up of 18 modern apartments offering convenient town centre living, alongside supported housing elements.

Demolition work has begun at Tudor Inn Cimla, where 22 new homes will be built. Foundation laying is expected to start shortly, and we will start engaging with Crynallt Primary school in the spring.

More on our progress in the next Cartref.



# Repairs, maintenance and improvements: who does what?

After holding repairs workshops with tenants, one thing became clear: many people aren’t sure who is responsible for repairs, maintenance, and improvements in their home. We realise it can be confusing, so here’s a quick guide to help.

This guide explains the main teams and what they’re responsible for. Depending on the job, work may be carried out by our in-house team or by trusted contractors we work with.

### Reactive repairs team

This team handles day-to-day repairs. Most jobs are carried out by our in-house team, who arrive in a Tai Tarian van.



Their role is to:

- Make homes safe
- Maintain their condition

### Voids team

An in-house team supported by contractors, responsible for:

- Repairing empty homes
- Maintaining homes during the first six months of a new tenancy

### Compliance team

Also in-house with contractor support. You’ll likely know Westward, who carry out out-of-hours heating repairs and annual gas safety checks.

Their responsibilities include:

- Electrical rewiring
- Gas and electrical servicing
- Fire safety
- Managing damp, mould, and condensation

### Major works team

These larger projects are usually carried out by contractors. In most cases you’ll have a Tenant Liaison Officer, who works for us, and will be your dedicated point of contact throughout the work.



The major works team deliver:

- New roofs
- WHQS kitchens and bathrooms
- External wall insulation (EWI) cladding
- PV solar panels
- Loft insulation
- Windows and doors
- External retrofit
- Adaptations

### New developments team

For new housing developments, we work with a contractor while our in-house team manages the project. A Community Engagement Officer works closely with local residents to keep them informed and involved.

Our apprentices often get the chance to work on these sites, gaining valuable hands-on experience and developing their skills for the future.

# Ana’s top tips Managing your money after Christmas



Happy New Year! We know the festive season can be expensive, and with the cost of living still high, many people are feeling the pinch. If you’re struggling financially, remember we are here for you.

We can support you in lots of ways, including:

- Arranging payment plans and repayments
- Benefit checks and entitlement
- Help with benefit applications, reviews, and appeals
- Navigating changes in circumstances
- Budgeting advice
- Signposting for debt support and more.

If you’re finding things difficult, please get in touch with our financial inclusion team on **01639 506623** or [financialinclusion@taitarian.co.uk](mailto:financialinclusion@taitarian.co.uk)



### The move to Universal Credit

The DWP is nearing the end of phasing out ‘legacy benefits’ and have been sending migration notice letters to claimants who need to migrate to

Universal Credit. If you are in receipt of income related employment support allowance (ESA), you should have had a letter regarding migration to Universal Credit with information on how to claim UC and the deadline to do this by. If you need any help with this, please contact our income team and we will support you. DO NOT ignore this letter. Doing it straight away will mean your UC matches your previous benefit income to make sure you’re not worse off financially because of the move.

### Benefit changes from April 2026

If you have a long-term health condition or a disability, you might get an additional payment included in your Universal Credit called the ‘limited capability for work-related activity’ (LCWRA) element. This is currently £423.27 extra each month, but the amount will be smaller for most people who start getting it on, or after, 6 April 2026. From that date it will be £217.26 a month.

### Report your health condition as soon as possible

If you’re eligible for the LCWRA element with Universal Credit, there’s usually a 3-month wait before you start getting it. You should apply as soon as

possible because if you start getting it before 6 April 2026, you’ll keep getting the current higher LCWRA rate.

If you are suffering with ill health and believe you may be eligible for LCWRA then please reach out to us as soon as possible, so we can help you make a claim. Similarly, if you have any questions regarding this change, please contact us and we will do our best to support you.

If you already get the LCWRA element, you don’t need to do anything. The amount you get will not go down because of the April changes.

### Removal of the two-child limit

In a move that’s hoped will lift around 450,000 children out of poverty by 2030, a removal of the Universal Credit two-child limit was announced in the Autumn Budget. This means, as of April, families will no longer be subject to a two-child rule applied to the child element of their UC entitlement. From April 2026 families will be able to claim the child element for all children, regardless of the family size.

There is not much detail available about these changes yet, however, we will keep you posted as we hear more.

Ana

# Smart ways to save in 2026

January is the perfect time to reset your finances and make your money go further. Here are some practical tips to help you start the year strong:

### 1. Refresh your budget

The cost of living is still high, so it’s important you update your budget to reflect rising costs and keep you in control. This can give you a more accurate idea of what disposable income you have each month to stay on track.

### 2. Audit your outgoings

Small savings can make a big difference. Have a look at where you can make little spending cuts and ask yourself ‘could I ditch that extra streaming service?’. It’s all too easy to sign up and forget about recurring fees, memberships or subscriptions so it’s a good idea to look at which you could do without, or whether you could make savings by shopping around.

### 3. De-clutter... but don’t throw away!

We all end up with things we don’t want or need, maybe clothes that no longer suit or unwanted Christmas gifts. A new year is a new start, so set aside an afternoon to de-clutter your home. Before you reach for the bin bags, consider selling your unwanted items to earn a bit of extra cash. Online platforms such as Vinted or Facebook Marketplace are a great place to start, or check out your local car boot sales.

### 4. Set yourself a saving challenge

Christmas might only just be over, but it’s time to start saving for next year! If you’re looking for a New Year savings challenge, the ‘penny a day’ challenge could be right up your street. Simply save 1p on day one, 2p the next, 3p the day after and so on. By the end of the year, you’ll have saved over £650 without really thinking about it.

### 5. Shop smarter

Before you buy, compare prices online and look for discount codes or cashback offers. Most supermarkets reduce prices on fresh items toward the end of the day. Shopping in the evening can mean big savings on meat, bread, and produce. These “yellow sticker” bargains are perfect for freezing or using in meals straight away, just make sure you only buy what you’ll use to avoid waste.





# Be weather ready this winter

Cold snaps and stormy weather can cause problems for your homes, so it's important to be prepared.

### Power Cut? Call 105

If you have a power cut, don't call your electricity supplier – call **105**. It's a free, easy-to-remember number that connects you to your local electricity network operator, the people who can fix the problem.

Visit **powercut105.com**

for advice on what to do during a power cut and how to prepare.



Add 105 to your contacts today and share this info with friends and family.

### Sign up for the priority services register today

The **priority services register (PSR)** is a free service that gives extra support to people who may need it during power cuts or emergencies. If you have a health condition, rely on medical equipment, or need additional help because of age, disability, or communication needs, registering ensures you get:

- Advance notice of planned power cuts
- Priority assistance during outages
- Extra support such as alternative heating or safe identification for home visits

It's quick and easy to register. Use the QR code above or call your energy supplier to sign up.

Don't wait for bad weather, register today and stay supported.

### Stay connected

Be prepared for a powercut, keep a torch, batteries, and essential supplies handy, and make sure your phone is charged with a power bank on standby if you have one.

### Flooding

In the event of flooding in your community, report it immediately to Neath Port Talbot Council on **01639 686868**.



You can also sign up for free flood warnings through Natural Resources Wales.

### How to sign up:

- Visit: **naturalresources.wales/register**
- Call Floodline: **0345 988 1188**
- For Typetalk: **0345 602 6340**

### How to thaw your condensate pipe

When temperatures drop, one of the most common reasons boilers stop working is a frozen condensate pipe. This pipe usually runs outside and can freeze in very cold weather, causing your boiler to shut down.

Your boiler may display a fault code – or stop working completely – and you might hear gurgling sounds, or notice water backing up.

### How to thaw it safely

1. **Locate the pipe** – It's usually a white plastic pipe running from your boiler to an outside drain.
2. **Warm the pipe** – Pour warm (not boiling) water over the frozen section or use a hot water bottle.
3. **Reset your boiler** – Once thawed, press the reset button on your boiler

Watch the step-by-step video from Worcester Bosch here:



Of course, if you are still having problems, you can call our team on **0300 777 3000**.

### Be weather ready

Secure any outdoor items or furniture to avoid damage to your home or possessions during bad weather or high winds.

# Standing together against stalking

At the end of last year, we focused on raising awareness about stalking through a video campaign created by members of our domestic abuse staff group.

Raising awareness is vital because stalking often goes unnoticed until it escalates. By sharing this information, we're helping people recognise the signs and take action early.

### What is stalking?

Stalking is a pattern of unwanted, repeated behaviour that can leave someone feeling scared or distressed. It's not always about threats or violence – persistent, unwanted contact that causes distress is still stalking.



- **THINK FOUR:** If the behaviour is fixated, obsessed, unwanted, and repeated, it is stalking.
- Trust your instincts: Feeling threatened or uncomfortable is enough reason to act.
- In immediate danger? Call 999 straight away.

### To report stalking:

- Visit the South Wales Police website
- Call 101
- Contact the National Stalking Helpline on 0808 802 0300 for confidential advice

Watch our video here:



# Your housing officer: support when you need it

Your housing officer is here to support you in managing and sustaining your tenancy, making sure all aspects of your contract are met. If you need extra help, they can refer you to other organisations for advice and assistance – including financial support if you're worried about money.

Housing officers also deal with complaints of anti-social behaviour (ASB). They'll provide clear advice on the options available to tackle ASB and, where necessary, work closely with the police to find practical solutions.

If you have any queries or need to speak to your housing officer, please email **communityhousingteam@tairarian.co.uk** or call **0300 777 0000**.

You can find which officer covers your area on our website or on page 3 of the rent booklet we sent to you recently.



If you find an issue in your home and believe we are responsible for fixing it, please report it as soon as possible.

### Non-urgent repairs

The easiest way to report non-urgent repairs is through our website. Simply provide the details of the repair and let us know when you're available. Our customer service team will check if it's our responsibility and get back to you to book the job.

### Emergency repairs

If your repair is an emergency – for example, an immediate danger or health hazard – please call us straight away on **0300 777 3000**. When you contact us, we'll ask a few questions to prioritise your repair into one of these categories:

- **Emergency repair** – We aim to complete within 24 working hours.
- **Urgent repair** – Attended within seven working days.

## Report repairs

- **Non-emergency repair** – Timescale depends on the nature of the work; we'll book an appointment for the job.

Sometimes, we may advise you to carry out simple repairs yourself, such as replacing sink or basin plugs or changing light bulbs. Our team can guide you over the phone if needed.

### Contacting us

Our contact centre is open Monday to Friday, 8am–6pm. For emergencies outside these hours, call the same number: **0300 777 3000**.

If you can't call or use our website, you can email **repairs@tairarian.co.uk** but please only use this email for non-urgent repairs.

## Thinking about a pet? Speak to us first

Pets can bring a lot of joy to a home, and we understand how important they are to many of our tenants. If you're considering getting a pet, please remember that your contract requires you to get permission first. This helps us make sure that pets are kept responsibly.

When you send us a request, we'll look at your situation to make sure it's suitable for your home and neighbours. Our guidance on pet ownership has recently been updated to reflect this individual approach. If you'd like to find out more, just get in touch with your housing officer.



## Bogus callers – check ID

**Our staff and contractors will always carry named ID to show they work for us when they visit your home.**

If a member of one of our teams comes to your home, then you can ask to see their ID.

If you are still feeling unsure about someone who knocks at your door saying they are working for us, or carrying out work on behalf of Tai Tarian, please check with us. You can do this by calling us on **0300 777 0000** and we can check if they are who they say they are.

We have a working relationship with the police who take reports of suspicious callers seriously.



## Keeping safe at home



Even though we like to think of our homes as havens, dangers can lurk if we don't take sensible precautions to keep us and our families safe.

We've teamed up with Mid and West Wales Fire Service to bring you practical tips that could save lives. This is the first in our new Cartref safety series and we're starting with a big one: electrical safety.

### Electrics

We all have so many gadgets and devices in our home that it's difficult not to power them or charge them at the same time. However, overloaded sockets and faulty wiring account for around 7000 house fires in the UK every year.

To help reduce the risk of an electrical fire, try when possible, to keep to the *one socket, one plug rule*. In fact, appliances such as a washing machine should always have their own plug as they are high powered.

If you are using an extension lead or adapter, check how many amps it can take, and be careful not to plug in devices that add up to more than that number.

You should always make sure your appliances are in good working order and keep an eye out for things such as loose wiring, scorch marks, hot plugs and sockets, and flickering lights. You should unplug anything you're not using or when you go to bed.

If you use an electric blanket, you should store them flat, rolled up or loosely folded to prevent damaging the internal wiring. Unplug them before you get into bed, unless it has a thermostat control for safe all-night use and try not to buy second hand blankets which may be faulty. It's also a good idea to check them regularly for wear and tear.

If you use a portable heater, then secure them against a wall to stop them falling over, and keep them clear from curtains and furniture, and never use them to dry clothes.

Make sure any electrical appliances you buy have the British or European safety mark on it.

### Safety tip

- If your clothes catch fire:
- Lie down and roll around – this makes it harder for the fire to spread.
  - Smother flames with a heavy material like a coat or blanket.
  - Don't run around – it will make the flames worse.

**Remember: Stop, drop and roll**



# Veggie pasta bake – comfort food on a budget

Looking for a quick, hearty family meal that won’t break the bank? This veggie pasta bake is perfect for busy days. It’s simple, affordable, and packed with flavour. Plus, you can easily adapt it with whatever you have in the cupboard or freezer.

### Ingredients:

- 300g pasta (penne or fusilli works best)
- 1 tin chopped tomatoes
- 1 tsp mixed herbs
- 150g grated cheese
- 200g frozen mixed vegetables (peas, sweetcorn, carrots)
- Salt and pepper to taste

### Method:

1. Cook the pasta according to packet instructions, then drain.
2. In a large bowl, mix the pasta with chopped tomatoes, mixed herbs, and frozen veg. Season with salt and pepper.
3. Transfer everything to an ovenproof dish, sprinkle generously with grated cheese, and bake at 180°C (fan 160°C) for about 20 minutes, until golden and bubbling.
4. Serve hot with some garlic bread.



Serves: 4



Prep/Cook time: 20 mins



### Budget tip:

- Add a tin of beans or leftover cooked meat for extra protein.
- Swap frozen veg for fresh if you have it, or throw in spinach for a boost of greens.

### Leftovers and freezing:

- **Leftovers:** Cool quickly, cover, and store in the fridge. Eat within 2 days.
- **Freezing:** Portion into airtight containers and freeze for up to 3 months. Defrost in the fridge overnight and reheat thoroughly until piping hot.
- **Extra tip:** Cook double and freeze half for an easy midweek meal!

## 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.

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

*Give it a go!*

## Go green

If you fancy receiving future editions of Cartref via e-mail instead of post, please let us know by emailing [media@taitarian.co.uk](mailto:media@taitarian.co.uk) or call 01639 505860.

All those who get in touch before 20th February will be entered into a prize draw to win a £50 shopping voucher.

Congratulations to Mrs Jones who won a £100 shopping voucher for giving us the correct answer of 8 for the number of times tenant was mentioned in our autumn Cartref.



### Need to get in touch?

- ☎ 0300 777 0000 (General enquiries)
- ☎ 0300 777 3000 (Report a repair – only emergency repairs can be dealt with outside of office hours.)



This document is available in alternative formats. Please phone 0300 777 0000 or email [media@taitarian.co.uk](mailto:media@taitarian.co.uk) to request a copy.

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