



barcud



NEWSLETTER APRIL 2021

Message from **Steve Jones** Group Chief Executive



As I write this article on St David's Day, with the snowdrops and daffodils bringing some cheer in the early spring sunshine, it's a good time to reflect on the first part of 2021. We are still in lockdown - mainly working from home - continuing to carry out essential maintenance, completing new homes, and assisting the Councils in Ceredigion and Powys with temporary accommodation and support services for homeless families. The vaccination programme is going well, and many of our frontline colleagues have had their first vaccine dose.

Over the last four months since the merger in November, we have been working closely with the Barcud Tenant Monitoring Group to review policies and involving them in the business planning workshops alongside our voluntary Board members. The new five-year business plan includes over £6m to upgrade existing homes this coming financial year and more money to build new homes.

As we begin to come out of lockdown in the coming months, we will be able to start estate inspections again alongside the Barcud Tenant Monitoring Group representatives, who will be able to increase their important scrutiny work on our services. It will be nice to walk around our estates and schemes again over the summer months and have doorstep or garden discussions with tenants and other residents.

Once the worst of this world pandemic is over, we will have to return to the other crisis facing the world, the threats posed by climate change.

We have been working over the last year with other housing associations in North and Mid Wales to jointly assess how, as landlords and employers, we can help the Welsh Government and the Councils tackle the climate change emergency. Building on the previous external insulation and green energy heating systems in Ceredigion, and our experience of building new low carbon passiv-haus apartments in Powys, we also need to look at the carbon impact of our offices, our travelling, and how we can upgrade older homes to both reduce carbon emissions, but also to keep the heating costs as low as possible for our tenants. This will involve a "fabric first" approach concentrating on insulation and homes that make maximum use of free energy from the sun. We will keep you informed about our future low carbon plans as they are developed.



Committed

We are committed to providing firm foundations for life.

Rent Reviews

A huge thank you to all tenants who took part in the rent review telephone survey over the Christmas period. By having your say, you helped ensure that Barcud sets affordable rents and provides value for money. If you are struggling to pay your rent or need advice on benefits that may be available to you, please contact the Cynnal team at Barcud, who will be happy to help.



Be a Part of 'Pawb' – the Home Forum

Barcud is developing a "Home Forum" building up a list of tenants who are happy to complete occasional surveys so we can get a snapshot of how we are performing in a particular service area.

You can do this by email, by post or by phone and the subjects will vary, but we hope that we will be able to get the views of a broader, more diverse cross-section of our tenants.

If you would like to find out more, please contact Sue Thomas or Alisa Cakebread on 0300 111 3030 or email: post@barcud.cymru



Sue Thomas



Alisa Cakebread

Sheltered Scheme Tenants Meet Online

Tenants from across our Sheltered schemes have held monthly online meetings as they cannot meet in their communal lounges or at the regular Sheltered Forum.

They have an informal chat for an hour, which allows catching up from their own homes' comfort (and safety). One of our tenants commented that it was "just lovely to see everyone and have a catch-up, was really great!"

The tenants are planning to hold these catch-up sessions on the 2nd Friday of every month at 10.30am. You do not have to have a computer or tablet or the internet - you can still join in using your phone.

There were tenants from Cardigan, Llandysul, Lampeter, Llanon and Llanidloes schemes at the last meeting. If you live in one of our Sheltered or Independent Living schemes and would like to be part of these events, please contact Sue Thomas, our Senior Tenant Involvement Officer by phone 0300 111 3030 or email: post@barcud.cymru to find out more.

Newsletter

We hope you like the second issue of your Barcud Newsletter. We want to work with all our tenants to come up with new ideas and refresh the whole look of the publication - it is yours after all! The production team will be preparing questionnaires and sample questions for social media to get your views. We're also looking for a new name! If you would like to become involved or have any suggestions, please email tenantnews@barcud.cymru or contact Sue Thomas, Senior Tenant Involvement Officer or Alisa Cakebread, Tenant Involvement Officer on 0300 111 3030.



Thousands of people
in Wales are entitled
to more benefits.



Are you missing out?

Advicelink Cymru can help you check and claim what's yours.

Call the free helpline: 0808 250 5700

gov.wales/claimwhatsyours

cyngor ar
bopeth

citizens
advice

Social Media

Our social media is here to share information and support our tenants, staff and the communities we all live in throughout mid and west Wales. With over 4,000 tenants, it is impossible to be familiar with every single tenant 'in person'. Some people also use nicknames on Facebook accounts, which also makes tracing your details difficult. If you send us a PM, please be mindful that we might have to ask for some more information to help find your details.

If you have a specific question and send a private message through to us, please remember we might not always know who (or where!) you are. We will do our best to respond as fully and quickly as possible.

If you need an urgent out-of-hours response to an issue at your property, please call 0300 111 3030.



Partnership Working Gets Results

Barcud and Dyfed Powys Police were granted a Closure Order concerning one of our properties in Llandrindod Wells. The Order was granted by Llandrindod Magistrates Court sitting on Wednesday, 17th February. A Closure Order is a Court Order that prohibits access to a property where there has been persistent anti-social behaviour. Failure to comply with a Closure Order can result in imprisonment, a fine, or both.

Barcud and Dyfed Powys Police have been working closely with the local community over several weeks leading up to the Closure Order being served. Local residents have supported both Barcud and the Police in their efforts to stop incidents of drunkenness and violence occurring at the property. Any breaches of the Closure Order must be reported to the Police on 101 and Barcud on 0300 111 3030

as soon as possible. Ella Hughes, Housing Officer for the Llandrindod Wells area, stated: "Barcud will not tolerate anti-social behaviour and will take strong action against those that are involved".



Rent to Own

Getting on the property ladder can be a real struggle for some who aspire to own their own home. In early December 2020, Barcud was proud to see the first phase of 'Rent to Own' applicants' move into their new homes.

This Welsh Government scheme allows successful applicants to move into a new home as a tenant with the end goal of buying the property. This enables the tenant to save while renting, making that essential deposit achievable and allowing them to get that first foot on the property ladder. The applicants also benefit from having the security of access to the housing support services that come hand in hand with being a Barcud Tenant and the confidence that the properties they are buying are a high quality, affordable and sustainable home.



Jo Hughes, Housing Officer for Welshpool, said: "The process of 'Rent to Own' has allowed me to really get to know our applicants and their journey, which for some this has been a long road. There was a real sense of excitement on the move-in day, which created a real sense of community and pride for applicants, staff and contractors who have been working on building the properties".

Gareth Turner is a Rent to Own tenant: "Having lived in a Mid-Wales housing property before, we knew what to expect and what was expected of us and this made the move from our old property to our new one a lot simpler. The Rent to Own scheme is a fantastic idea. Trying to save for a decent deposit whilst having a young family is near impossible. The scheme helps up save a big chunk without having the temptation to dip into it for other things".

He added, "I have already suggested the scheme to two or three friends and family - it's a brilliant way to get on to the property ladder".

If you would like more information, please contact Jo Hughes or Keith Henson on 0300 111 3030

Become a Shareholder

Any Barcud tenant can become a shareholder, subject to approval by the Board of Management. There is a nominal fee of £1.00 and membership entitles the tenant to vote at Barcud's Annual General Meeting (AGM) or Special AGM and have more of a say in the future management of the association.

If you were already a shareholder with Tai Ceredigion or Mid-Wales Housing, your shareholder membership will transfer to Barcud and you will receive a new shareholder certificate in the next few months.



To get an application form or find out more, please contact Sue Thomas, Senior Tenant Involvement Officer on 0300 111 3030 or email: post@barcud.cymru

Garden Photo Competition

Spring is here and we would like to invite you to take part in our annual garden competition. Unfortunately, Coronavirus is still present throughout Wales and this has put a stop to travelling, so for 2021, we are asking you to send in your photos again.

All you have to do is take your camera for a walk in your garden and share your photos with us. They can be printed out (if you can get access to printing) and sent by post or emailed to us.

Gardening is great for your health and wellbeing (so long as you keep safe and are responsible during this challenging time). A colourful and interesting garden not only makes a difference to your property but can benefit the community you live in and the environment too.

Each category winner will receive a £50 garden centre voucher. The winners will be announced in the August edition of the newsletter. Good luck and stay safe.



The categories are:

1. Best Floral Display (private garden)
2. Best Hanging Basket, Container or Window Box
3. Best Vegetable Garden
4. Best Floral Display in an Unusual Container
5. Best Insect-Friendly or Eco/Wildlife Garden Feature (under 16s)

Please send the photo of your entry, clearly stating the number of the class you are entering, along with your full name and address. For verification purposes, you must be in the photo with your entry. Photos are to be submitted without any digital editing beyond cropping, adjustments to exposure, sharpness and minor colour correction.

You can find terms and conditions on our website: barcud.cymru

Please send your entries to:

Gardening Competition 2021
c/o Alisa Cakebread

Barcud

Ty Canol House

Ffordd Croesawdy

Newtown

Powys SY16 1AL

or email: Alisa.Cakebread@barcud.cymru

Closing date for entries: 16th July 2021



Come and join us for our first online

Tenant Liaison Forum

Wednesday 5th May 11am - 12.00

- 11.00 am** **Welcome and update**
Paul Clasby, Chair, Barcud Monitoring Group
- 11.20 am** **Update, the first six months and planning ahead**
Steve Jones, Chief Executive, Barcud
- 11.40 am** **Question and answer session**
- 11.55 am** **Thanks and close**

This event will be held virtually and you will be able to attend the meeting via the RingCentral (zoom) online meeting platform. This can be accessed using a computer, tablet or smartphone.

If you do not have any of these you can still dial in, using a landline or mobile phone.

Places may be limited, so you must register to attend the Forum by Friday 23rd April. You can do this by contacting: post@barcud.cymru or phoning: 0300 111 3030.

Joining details for the Forum will be provided once you have registered.

Staff will be available if you need help and support or a "trial run" beforehand.

Barcud will cover any reasonable cost incurred if you have to dial in.

If you have any questions that you would like to be asked at the Forum, or if you need any further information, please contact: sue.thomas@barcud.cymru or phone 01570 424313.

This event will be recorded and may be made available via social media.

Working Through the Pandemic

The Barcud team have worked through the pandemic and ensured our tenants' services have to continue seamlessly (following Welsh Government Covid guidelines). Here is Rachel. She has continued to fulfil her role with Medra through the last 12 months by cleaning offices and sheltered schemes and providing a deep clean service for empty properties so that our homes are ready for new tenants. Thanks Rachel, and every single member of the team, for your efforts.



Proud

We take pride in what we do, and we take pride in doing it well.

Domestic Abuse Support



Montgomery Family Crisis Centre is working on the following project.

Intervention Hub Pilot - a three-month pilot programme called the Domestic Abuse Hub. The programme is for anyone who is concerned about their behaviour towards their partner or a loved one.

Please email admin@familycrisis.co.uk or call 01686 629114 for more information.

Agencies that can also support you should you wish to contact them:

West Wales Domestic Abuse Service

Offers refuge for women, children and men fleeing domestic abuse (24hr helpline)

01970 625585 (North Ceredigion)

01239 615385 (South Ceredigion)

MFCC (Montgomery Family Crisis Centre)

01686 629 114

Live Fear Free Helpline

All Wales Domestic Abuse & Sexual Violence Helpline.

info@livefearfreehelpline.wales

0808 8010 800

National Centre for Domestic Violence

For non-molestation orders.

0800 970 2070

Victim Support

0845 30 30 900

Hafan Cymru

01267 225555

Calan DVS

Formerly Brecon Women's Aid.

01874 625146

Calan DVS

Formerly Radnorshire Women's Aid.

01597 824655

Hollie Guard App:

holliegazzard.org/hollieguard/

DYN Project

Support for Male Victims.

0808 801 0321

National Stalking Helpline

0808 802 0300

Paladin's

National Stalking Advocacy Service

Provides support, advice and advocacy to victims of stalking.

020 3866 4107

Welsh Government Elections

Voting is a devolved issue and comes under the Welsh Government. Everyone aged 16 or over who lives in Wales has a right to vote. Please check with your local county council that your name is on the list. It's your vote and the member of the Senedd represents you - don't waste it.

www.ceredigion.gov.uk/your-council/voting-elections/

en.powys.gov.uk/article/2129/The-Electoral-Register

carmarthenshire.gov.wales/home/council-democracy/elections-voting/register-to-vote

pembrokeshire.gov.uk/elections-and-voting/how-do-you-register-to-vote



Care

We care about our people, communities, culture, country and planet.

Great Partnership for Energy Efficiency

Barcud is working with Ceredigion Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB) on an exciting new project and is looking for people in Ceredigion and the surrounding areas to sign up.

The service will offer a free 'money health check', alongside advice and support to reduce home energy bills, save money on other essentials and access benefits, grants and further help to increase household income.

Free advice and support will be available for householders to get the most out of their heating systems and to have a safe and warm home. This will also include providing items like draught excluders, energy-saving lightbulbs, boiler cylinder jackets and other household energy-saving items free of charge, following an assessment of applicable measures for the individual home, while stocks last.

New 'Tell Us' Policy

Barcud is committed to providing high-quality services to our tenants and residents. However, we recognise that sometimes things do not always go to plan and the services we provide do not meet people's changing needs. Therefore, we must value all feedback, including comments, compliments, concerns, and complaints and use them to direct, or where appropriate, make improvements and efficiencies in our services.

Your compliments are always welcome, as they highlight to our colleagues and service teams the areas of good practice within Barcud. However, if something goes wrong or you are dissatisfied with our services, please tell us.

It is easier for us to resolve complaints if you make them quickly and directly to the department concerned. They can then try to resolve any problems on the spot. You can express your

As part of the project, Barcud and CAB are also working on a Welsh Government Pilot to assess this advice's effectiveness, so you are encouraged to take part in this scheme if requested. CAB will treat all personal details and circumstances confidentially.

If you would like to be involved or seek support, please contact; William Jones or Bronwen Robb at Ceredigion Citizens Advice on 01239 621974 or enquiries@cabceredigion.org.

The phone is answered 9-3 Mon-Thurs and there is an answerphone at other times, which is checked Mon-Fri.

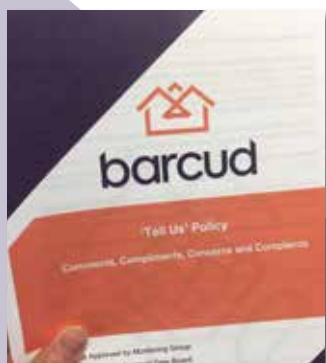


concern in any of the ways below:

- ask for a copy of our form from the person you are already in contact with. Tell them that you want us to deal with your concern formally.
- get in touch with our central complaint contact point on 0300 111 3030 if you want to make your complaint over the phone
- use the form on our website; barcud.cymru
- email us at post@barcud.cymru
- write to us at the following address: Barcud, Ty Canol House, Ffordd Croesawdy, Newtown, Powys SY16 1AL
- speak to any Barcud colleague

We are committed to making our service easy to use for all members of the community. In line with our statutory equalities duties, we will always ensure that reasonable adjustments are made to help tenants and residents access and use our services.

If you need help to make a complaint, please let us know.



Respect

We respect the people we work with, and work for, and value the contribution they make.

Barcud Monitoring Group Update

Greetings fellow tenants,

We hope that you are all well and finding ways to cope during these extraordinary times.

The past few months have been exceptionally busy for the group as we have been working in partnership with Barcud and jointly ensuring that tenants are involved at every level of the association's operations. It is still early days yet for Barcud, but every effort is already being made to ensure we as tenants experience little to no disruption in the services we receive. There is still a lot of work to do behind the scenes, including installing new computer software in the Newtown office for housing and property services. It is hoped that much of this work will be finished by the end of the summer and this will remove the current need for former tenants of Mid-Wales Housing and Tai Ceredigion to contact their former contact centres. The new system will also introduce a "Contact Monitoring & Tracking" facility, something the group very much welcomes.

So, what has the group been doing? Members have been attending monthly meetings with Barcud's Leadership and Operational Management teams to raise and discuss both strategic and operational matters.

Members have attended joint meetings to create a new "Rent Setting Policy" and "Shareholder Policy", reviewed policies such as the "Rent Arrears Policy", the creation of a new tenancy pack for new tenants, created a plain language information sheet for prospective tenants about the tenancy agreement and we are currently working on a new complaints policy and procedures.

Some members have also attended two Business Planning Day events with the Barcud Board, Leadership and Operational Management teams, given a presentation to the Board on the importance of tenant involvement

and valuing tenant views and created a video presentation for the new staff training program. We have also attended external public events with tenants from across Wales, which have included Building Safety, Tenant Network events, the Customer Services Ombudsman, the Regulatory Framework for Housing, the 2021 Census, Introduction to Housing Policy and the Tenants Disability Network. All these events help our members learn new things and find out what other tenant groups are doing.

Sadly, due to the current pandemic, we have had to postpone our Void and Estate inspections, but our members are keen to start these again at the earliest opportunity.

We are pleased to continually welcome new members into the group from both Powys and Ceredigion and our membership currently stands at 21 tenants and one leaseholder. We are still looking for new members from underrepresented areas such as Cardigan, Machynlleth, Llandrindod Wells, and Newtown. If you would like to come along to one of our monthly meetings to see what we do, please contact Sue Thomas, Senior Tenant Involvement Officer on 0300 111 3030.

As stated, it is still early days for Barcud and there is always a great deal more work to be done throughout the year, so please bear with us as we all work together to finalise the transition.

Stay safe, be well and let's hope for a better 2021.

Paul Clasby

Chair, Barcud Monitoring Group



Team

We work together with our colleagues, our tenants, our communities and partners to help each other succeed.