



barcud

NEWSLETTER
September 2021

Message from Steve Jones Group Chief Executive



We are now fast approaching Barcud's first birthday. It's been an extremely challenging and busy year and I'm proud of the way my colleagues have stepped up to the challenge in all departments within the association to ensure service delivery during merger and Covid has been as seamless as possible.

BMG

The Barcud Monitoring Group are forming firm foundations for our future and our regular meetings to address tenants' issues are proving to be a great stream of information and support. They are working on your behalf and if you would like to know more about their work, or if you would like to get involved and represent the tenants' views, please contact Sue Thomas or Alisa Cakebread who will be happy to discuss how you can become a member.

Business Plan

I'm glad to report that the new five-year business plan has now been published on our website and work has already started at pace to achieve our targets. Upgrading existing homes and building new, energy efficient homes in the communities we choose to live are our top priorities.



Decarbonisation Plan

As we enter our next six months as Barcud, the Board and Leadership team are keen to ensure we are taking action on climate change to decarbonise the company and the homes we

provide and to drive sustainable communities across the Barcud region. As a leading provider of quality homes and services, we want to make a positive difference to our tenants, staff and in rural Mid and West Wales.

What does this mean? The focus will be on engaging with key stakeholders and in particular consulting with our tenants and staff. We are here to create sustainable tenancies for everyone in the Barcud family and to make a difference in the communities we live and work in. A project team will collect insight over the next 6 months to understand how we can reduce fuel poverty, improve living conditions and reduce our carbon footprint as an organisation.

Board Update

As we go to press, I am delighted to welcome a new member of the Board at Barcud. Carina Roberts brings with her a wealth of housing experience from previous roles with the North Wales housing association, Cynefin. Many congratulations on your appointment, Carina, and I look forward to working with you on future projects.



Covid

We are all still living with Covid - the fears, the constraints, the health issues. Although restrictions have lifted, we all need to be aware of our responsibilities towards each other's safety. Our staff will do everything possible to support our tenants and we hope that you, our tenants, will also be mindful of the constraints we work under and fears we, as colleagues, have for each other and our families. If you have maintenance work booked in and someone in your household has Covid symptoms, please let us know. We're here to support each other.

Steve Jones

Barcud Monitoring Group Update

Greetings fellow tenants,

We hope you are well during these challenging times. Both Barcud and the BMG are continually having to find new ways of working due to this ongoing pandemic and it has been and continues to be an ongoing learning process for us all.

As ever, the past few months have been hectic for the group as we work closely with Barcud to ensure its services, policies and procedures are delivered equally across its housing stock. However, we are all confident that this process will become easier in the next couple of months following the installation of new computer equipment and software in the Newtown office. For all of us, this cannot come soon enough.



I want to take this opportunity to extend the groups gratitude and best wishes to Karen Oliver, the former Chair of the Tai Ceredigion, Shadow, and Barcud Boards. Karen had been a friend, fellow volunteer, and staunch believer in tenant involvement throughout the association. Karen stepped down from the Board due to increasing personal commitments and we hope to see her at future events. I would also like to congratulate Stephen Cripps as the new Chair of the Barcud Board. Steve has been involved with Tai Ceredigion, the Shadow Board and Barcud. He shares the same views and sentiment towards tenants as Karen.

Congratulations Steve.

In the past few months, the group has had separate meetings with Steve Jones (CEO Barcud Group), Steven Cripps (Chair, Barcud Board), Janice Thomas (PR & Comms Officer) and Astari (Barcuds Independent External Auditors). Members have also attended many

events with tenants from across Wales on decarbonisation, Welsh Housing Quality Standards (WHQS), Scrutiny, Disability and much more. Members have also attended events with Welsh Government and submitted their views on the recent Renting Homes Act 2016 (Wales) Model Occupational Contracts consultation, which are to replace our current tenancy agreements in 2022. Introducing these contracts will require a great deal of time for both Barcud and the group, but we are ready to assist. The group will restart our empty property inspections to ensure they meet our standards before they are let. We have also started our independent review of current service charges following some training from Astari. We are also looking at how this year's Tenants Conference can be organised under the current restrictions using experience gained from our first online Tenants Liaison Forum held on 5 May. Please keep an eye out for future information on the Tenants Conference. If you are available to attend, please come along and support us.

We are continually looking for new members. I am pleased to report that we now have a member from Cardigan following our last appeal. We are still keen to hear from interested tenants from Powys and Ceredigion. If you would like to attend one of our monthly meetings to see what we do, please contact Sue Thomas, Senior Tenant Involvement Officer on 0300 111 3030 or email post@barcud.cymru

Finally, I wish to thank all my fellow tenants who have dedicated their time freely to the group for their continued commitment. Thank you. Until the next time, be safe and be well.

Paul Clasby
Chairperson
Barcud Monitoring Group



Survey!

Fill it in and send it back for a chance to win one of four £100 vouchers.

You should have now received your copy of the first Barcud tenants survey. It is an independent survey distributed to all tenants. It will help Barcud find out how satisfied tenants are with the service we provide.

The results will be fed back to Barcud without your personal details so you can be confident that they are anonymous.

Your views are very important to us, they let us know what you think and we will use your comments to help shape and improve the service we provide to you in the future.

Barcud is committed to listening to what you have to say, so please help us by filling it in.

As an added incentive, each returned survey will be entered in a free prize draw, with four randomly selected lucky winners receiving a £100 voucher.

If you would like more information, please phone Sue Thomas, Senior Tenant Involvement Officer on 0300 111 3030



Thoughts on Rubbish

The rubbish and recycling at some of our estates, schemes and flats has become an increasing problem over the past six months. Rubbish bags are left out on wrong days and waste that should be recycled is placed in general waste.

Not disposing of your rubbish correctly attracts pests and makes the estate look untidy. It's your responsibility to keep the area where you live clean and tidy by following rubbish and recycling guidelines.

It is an obligation in your tenancy agreement to;

- keep all common areas (inside and outside) clean and clear of obstructions.
- leave refuse only in the bins or storage facilities provided and not to put refuse bags or bins out for collection other than on the day they are due to be collected.



Not disposing of your rubbish correctly is a breach of your tenancy conditions.

1. Recycling

Powys and Ceredigion County Council provide recycling bins or bags. Please recycle as much as possible, ensuring that you place recyclables in the appropriate bins to prevent contamination.

2. General waste and collection

You can check out your collection dates for general and recycling waste on your local council's website by inserting your postcode on the following websites.

Powys: en.powys.gov.uk/binday

Ceredigion: bit.ly/2UOLbad

Please do not place your bin bag or bin out on the pavement until 7pm the evening before collection. If you use a bin store, please ensure that you use the correct large bin for your waste.

For more information, don't hesitate to get in touch with your housing officer or Powys County Council Waste management on www.powys.gov.uk/recycle or Ceredigion County Council Waste management on <https://www.ceredigion.gov.uk/resident/bins-recycling/>

STEP Project

After an unsettling year due to Covid-19, STEP is here to help kick start your career and get you back on track to where you want to be. If you are aged 25+, economically inactive, or unemployed for 12 months or more, then get in touch today. You might be eligible for this career-changing opportunity and get those certificates or employment skills you have always wanted. There are limited spaces, so call today, email or pop into our offices in the new Creuddyn development in Lampeter.



We can offer a range of services to participants:

- FREE 1-2-1 Support
- Paid work placements
- Accredited qualifications
- CSCS cards
- Interview tips
- CV building and makeovers
- Confidence building
- Employability Skills
- In-house training
- Workshops
- Volunteering opportunities

Email: Step@caresociety.org.uk

Phone: 07790 988514

Anyone for Tennis?

Over the past six months, Westdale Midlands Ltd has been carrying out a large external wall insulation contract at Brongwinau Commins Coch on behalf of Barcud.

As part of the contract, they committed £6,500 towards a community benefit project identified by one of our Surveyors, David Lewis, during his site inspection. As you will see from the before and after photos, we have used the money to regenerate the tennis court on the estate as it was looking fairly old and tired. The Court is now multi-sport as it has been fitted with football goals in addition to the tennis nets and marked out accordingly. The idea is to put the nets up during the summer months when tennis tends to be more popular.



We hope the residents of Brongwinau and neighbouring Clawdd Helyg will make the most of this great new facility.

Mike Rothwell, Special Projects Manager at Westdale Midlands Ltd, said, "Having worked a few times with Tai Ceredigion and now Barcud, Westdale Midlands Ltd is gaining an understanding of their aspirations and of their commitment to the communities they serve.

"We are proud of the work we undertake on tenants' homes. We also appreciate the need to take every opportunity to broaden the legacy of projects that we are involved in beyond those households directly involved. We also understand the inconvenience that can be caused for residents not directly involved."



Our work in Brongwinau has provided an excellent opportunity to demonstrate our contribution to Barcud's commitment. Therefore, we are pleased to support the proposal to refurbish the tennis court area for the benefit of the whole community."

Antisocial Behaviour

What is it?

- Excessive or persistent noise, e.g. loud music or TV.
- Abusive or insulting behaviour.
- Shouting, screaming, swearing or drunkenness.
- Using violence or threatening to use violence.
- Vandalism, graffiti, or fly-tipping.

ASB is not limited to the above; criminal acts and behaviour may also form a part.

In June 2021, a Judge at Aberystwyth County Court granted possession of a property to Barcud where the tenant was involved in serious ASB, including drug use, assaults on local residents, causing damage and making threats to cause damage and threats to individuals, noise nuisance, shouting and screaming. Barcud had tried working with the individual by offering support in each letter sent about the tenant's behaviour.

By working with Partner Agencies, evidence was collated and the case was presented to the Court. At this stage, the Court was advised of the tenant's effect on other residents in the area. Some of them considered selling their properties and moving, having lived in the same location for more than 30 years. The relief of the residents upon learning of the grant of possession order was evident when the residents collectively wrote into Barcud to thank the Housing Team for their efforts and support through the process. The ASB at one property meant that Barcud could not let an adjoining property in an area where there were 206 applicants for a two-bedroom home. This ASB was blocking an allocation of a home to a family on the Housing Register in much need of a safe, secure place to live. Antisocial behaviour of this kind will not be tolerated; the Housing Team will pursue tenants to Court when needed.



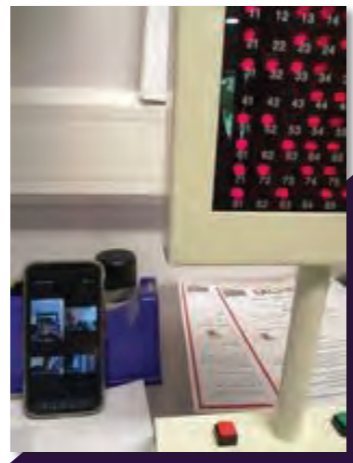
Sheltered Forum

Covid-19

In March 2020, the Coronavirus lockdown was enforced on us all, forcing the Sheltered Forum to be cancelled. All the communal lounges within our Sheltered Schemes were closed down and tenants could not travel and meet in one scheme to enjoy a regular social event together.

Every effort was made to get the Sheltered Forum up and running as soon as possible in a safe way. Using video call technology, The Sheltered Forum restarted in September 2020. The tenants who wanted to take part were able to do so through video calls or telephone, where they could dial in to join.

A great calendar of events was organised for the first six months of 2021, including discussions, an online concert, quizzes, games and talks with invited guests.



Moving forward

Although we have had to put face-to-face meetings on hold due to the Covid restrictions, we know many of our Tenants are still keen to meet, stay connected, and have a catch up each month. We will carry on meeting online on the 2nd Friday of every month at 10.30am until we can again meet up in person safely. We are all hoping this will be in the not too distant future. If you would like any information on how to get involved with the forum, please give me a call. In the meantime, take care and stay safe

Tess Price

Forum Co-ordinator and Scheme Co-ordinator at Llys Pedr, Lampeter

Renting Homes (Wales) Act 2016

In 2016 the Welsh Government passed The Renting Homes (Wales) Act intending to make it simpler and easier to rent a home in Wales. The Act introduces many changes to tenancy laws. Once implemented, the changes will apply to virtually all rented properties in Wales, both private and socially rented.

Not all of the provisions of the Act are in force yet, but Welsh Government anticipates that they will be by Spring 2022.

Once the Act is fully implemented, there will be many changes to tenancy laws in Wales, including changes to tenancy agreements which will then be known as occupation contracts.

Many current tenancies and licences will be replaced with two kinds of 'occupation contract':

- (1) a 'secure contract'
- (2) a 'standard contract'.

Blooming Marvellous!

The tenants at Glascoed Sheltered Scheme in Llandysul have been extra busy over lockdown. By working hard on their gardens and green areas around the scheme, they've made it such a happy and colourful place for all to enjoy. They have also been enjoying the benefits of exercise and fresh air at the same time! The tenants would like to say a big thank you to Tysul Youth Centre in Llandysul for all the hard work and support they offered during this time. Working together like this truly is community spirit. If you're on Facebook, go to the Barcud page to see the video.



Maes Gogerddan Tenants in the heart of Aberystwyth were lucky to receive a donation of seeds and gardening stuffs from Morrisons in Aberystwyth. The sunflowers look amazing and are brightening up the scheme.

Landlords will be grouped into one of 2 groups:
(1) community landlords (council and housing associations such as Barcud)

(2) private landlords (any landlord in Wales who is not a community landlord).

Tenants will be known as 'contract holders' and will be receiving new occupation contracts once the changes are implemented.

Don't worry; we'll be here to support you through these changes.

Your security of tenure will not be affected and Barcud will be contacting each tenant well before the changes are in place to explain the update.

The housing team will also work with the Barcud Monitoring Group as developments occur and changes are introduced.

Think Before You Flush

The Barcud maintenance team have been looking at call-out data recently and blocked drains have come up top on the list for weekend call-outs.

There are concerns that more and more people are flushing things down the toilets that shouldn't be there. Please be careful about what you flush down the loo.

A recent analysis of out of hours calls for the Medra team have shown that we've had call-outs to blocked drains every weekend. Some cases are due to drainage faults, but there are concerns that more and more people are flushing things that are not designed to go through the system.



Please take care and think before you flush!
<https://thinkbeforeyouflush.org/what-to-flush/>

Exciting Developments at Churchstoke

Getting on the property ladder can be a real struggle for some who aspire to own their own home.

That is why in early December, Barcud was proud to see more families move into their brand new "Rent to Own" homes.

The "Rent to Own" scheme is a Welsh Government funded project which provides the opportunity for successful applicants to move into a home with the end goal of buying the property. The scheme allows the tenant to save while renting, making that essential deposit achievable and enabling them to get that foot up onto the property ladder. The applicants also benefit from having the security of accessing the housing support services that come hand in hand with being a Barcud Tenant and the confidence that the properties they are buying are high quality, affordable and sustainable homes.



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 has been a long road for some. There was a real sense of excitement on the move-in day, which created a real sense of

community and pride by applicants, staff and contractors who have been working on building these homes'.

Gareth Turner, a Rent to Own tenant, said, 'Having lived in a Mid-Wales Housing Association home before, we knew what to expect and what was expected of us, the move from our old property to our new one was made a lot simpler. "The Rent to Own-Wales scheme is a fantastic idea. Having a young family saving to get a decent amount for a deposit is near impossible. The scheme helps us save a big chunk without having the temptation to dip into it for other things. I have already suggested two or three friends and family take on a "Rent to Own" property. I think it's a brilliant way to get on to the property ladder".

How does it work?

How 'Rent to Own - Wales' works

- you will initially rent the home and can receive 25% of the rent paid over the duration of the tenancy and 50% of the increase in the property value (if any) during the period of time you have rented the property to use as a deposit towards purchasing the property.
- your Rent to Own - Wales agreement lasts up to 5 years, you can apply to buy your home at anytime between the end of the 2nd year and the end of the agreement.

Final note: These properties are some of the last to be funded under the Rent to Own-Wales scheme.

Want to know more?

Don't delay! Please get in touch with our agent, MMP Homes, on 01938 554818.

To Contact Barcud

By Phone

Call 0300 111 3030

Press 1 (previous TC tenants)

Press 2 (previous MWA tenants)

By Post

Barcud, Unit 4, Pont Steffan Business Park, Lampeter, Ceredigion SA48 7HH

Online

barcud.cymru

Fill in the 'contact us' form from our website

Tenant Portal (previous MWA tenants)

TyFi App (previous TC tenants)

Email: post@barcud.cymru

Facebook: Barcud Twitter: @taibarbud

TyFi

We're glad to report that there is now access to an online portal for all tenants. You can find this on the website (under Tenant Services). It is an excellent way for tenants to communicate on-line with us regarding tenancy, rent account, repairs, compliments and complaints or anti-social behaviour issues.



UC Universal Credit Credyd Cynhwysol

Important Universal Credit Update

The Government introduced a £20 a week increase in Universal Credit payments in April 2020, to support struggling households as they waded through the coronavirus pandemic.

The measure was intended to last for 12 months, due to end on March 31, 2021. But after pressure on the Government, Chancellor Rishi Sunak announced a six-month extension in the March Budget.

This Covid uplift will now end on September 30, 2021. There will not be any further extensions after this date and your payments will be reduced by £20 per week. You will receive a warning about the cut through your Universal Credit journals and online statements, while letters will go out to the most vulnerable.

If you are worried about this reduction and are in need of support with your finances, please don't hesitate to contact Barcud's Cynnal Team on 0300 111 3030.

AGM

The first Barcud AGM will be held (virtually) on Thursday, 23rd of September.

If you would like to attend, please contact Customer Services on 0300 111 3030.

Pawb

Home Forum

Newsletter Survey

Thank you to those who took the time to complete the recent survey about the Barcud newsletter.

Of the responses received, 93% read the newsletter, with 60% reading every issue and 33% reading it occasionally.

93% thought the articles were helpful.

60% preferred a copy in the post, while 33% preferred receiving it by email.

40% wanted more information about tenant involvement, 20% a children's page, and 20% wanted competitions.

We have had some suggestions about a potential new name and would like to hear from more tenants, with their ideas too.

Other comments we received were:

"I think it's well-formatted and presented"

"The latest newsletter was easy to read."

We received a range of ideas for future surveys, so if you would like to be part of these surveys or have a new name for the newsletter, please contact one of Barcud's Tenant Involvement Officers by phoning 0300 111 3030 or emailing post@barcud.cymru.

Come and join us
for our first online

Tenant Conference

Wednesday 6th October 2021
1.30pm - 3.30pm

Please contact Customer Services on 0300 111 3030 to register.

Log in details will be provided nearer the date.

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NEWSLETTER APRIL 2021

A Free Food Forest in Machynlleth

Barcud has recently provided some communal areas in Machynlleth for an exciting project funded by the National Lottery Community Fund Climate Action Boost to plant 'edible' trees and bushes across the town to provide residents of Machynlleth with homegrown fruit and nuts. Angela Paxton from Gerddi Bro Ddyfi Gardens organised the project, initially contacting the Association in November 2020.

Angela, Huw Cooke and residents of Maes Dyfi, Craigfryn and Cwrt David Williams planted the trees in March 2021. This wonderful project has been welcomed by residents, who have become tree guardians following training from Gerddi Bro Ddyfi Gardens on upkeep of the plants.

We are looking forward to watching these plants flourish!



Medra Update

Congratulations to Medra team members, Eirian Morgan and Chris James, for completing their CITB Site Supervision Safety Training Scheme. Both have been working on the new extension at Glyn Padarn Sheltered Scheme, Aberystwyth.



Call Outs

Our Medra repairs are booked in so that the team can use their time efficiently. If you book a repair with Medra, please let us know if there is any issue at all that would prevent us from completing the work. We've had recent instances of tenants not letting our staff enter properties to fix problems they had asked for assistance with. This:

1. Wastes time
2. Wastes tenants' money
3. Stops us from attending other jobs

Thank you.



Winter Fuel Payments

Winter Fuel Payment is an annual tax-free payment to help with heating costs. Most payments are made in November and December. When the weather is exceptionally cold for a sustained period, you may also be eligible for a Cold Weather Payment.

In the financial year April 2021 to March 2022, the payment is:

- £200 if you were under 80
- £300 if you were over 80.

However, you'll usually get less if you live with other people who also qualify.

You may be eligible for Winter Fuel Payment if you meet all the following criteria:

- you were born on or before 26 September 1955 (to be eligible for the financial year April 2021 to March 2022 - the eligibility birth date changes every financial year).
- you lived in the UK throughout the qualifying week for the financial year of 2021–2022 (this is 20-26 September 2021).

You usually get a Winter Fuel Payment automatically if you receive the State Pension or another benefit, such as Pension Credit (but not Housing Benefit, Universal Credit or the Council Tax Reduction Scheme).

If you qualify but don't get paid automatically, you'll need to make a claim.

If this is the first year you can claim, or if you've never claimed before, call the Winter Fuel Payment helpline on 0800 731 0160. You'll need to know your National Insurance number and your bank or building society details.

You only need to claim once. After this, you should automatically receive a payment every year, as long as your circumstances don't change.

If you are finding it difficult to manage financially or if you would like any additional information on the Winter Fuel Payment, please get in touch with Barcud's Cynnal team on 0300 111 3030.



Creuddyn

By the time you read this, the handover of our new business and training facility in Lampeter will be complete. Creuddyn will offer brand new state of the art, eco-friendly, office units and hot desks to rent in this amazing building. With individual entrances, reception area, communal kitchen, shower/wc facilities, parking, lift, EV charging point and excellent meeting rooms for hire on an ad hoc basis.

If you're looking for

1. a new home for your current business, or
2. a home for your new start-up business,

please contact: Catrin Owen on 01570 424365 creuddyn@barcud.cymru

Garden Photo Competition 2021

We want to say a big thank you to everyone who entered the garden photo competition this year. The standard was extremely high, with beautiful and colourful gardens. Keeping everything looking so lovely must be a real challenge.

Thank you to Newtown Gardening Club, who very kindly agreed to judge the competition for us. All the entries were kept anonymous, and the ten judges had some tough decisions to select the winners. We couldn't have run the competition without their expertise.

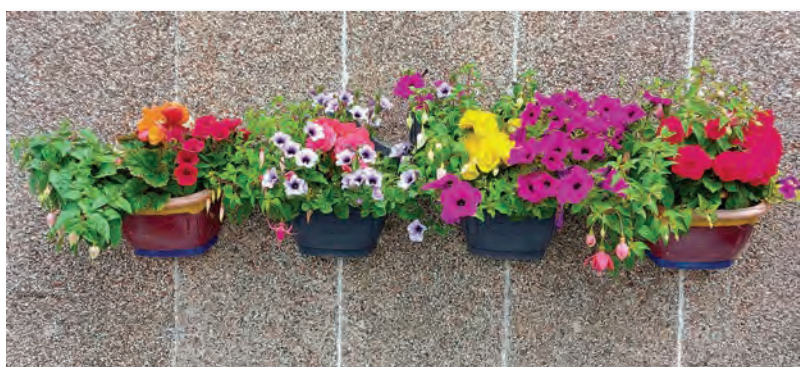
Garden photo competition category winners:



1. Best floral display (private garden)

Mr Gillman-Yates, Cardigan

Judges' comments: We were very impressed by the combination of pots. Different heights of plants helped to add interest.



2. Best hanging basket, container or window box

Mr Gillman-Yates, Cardigan

Judges' comments: This one stood out as being a real splash of colour on the wall.

5. Best insect-friendly or eco/wildlife garden feature (under 16s)

Sadly, we had no entries for this category.

The winners of each category will receive a certificate in recognition of their hard work in their gardens and £50 National Garden gift vouchers. Happy spending! Well done to all of the winners.

4. Best floral display in an unusual container

Deborah Hawke, Aberporth
Judges' comments: We thought this one was really inventive and different.



3. Best vegetable garden

Linda Moorhouse, Cardigan
Judges' comments: This one showed a whole range of veg growing in a small space.

