

SYNOPSIS OF NOMINATIONS

Tenant Participation Awards 2010

Synopsis of Nominations

As in previous years, 2010's submissions were of a high standard and they truly captured the imagination of the judges, not only the quality of the written material sent in but the innovative and imaginative range of projects and initiatives being undertaken in Wales.

This synopsis has been developed to provide you with a flavour of all the nominations received this year. We hope that the information contained in the forthcoming pages will attract your attention and encourage you to engage with those groups/individuals to learn more about what they are doing in the arena of tenant participation.

VAL FELD WALES COMMUNICATION IN HOUSING - LANDLORD

- **Cynon Taff Community Housing Group**

Cynon Taff's maintenance section was reorganised in order to build confidence and competence in staff in dealing with repair requests, with the aim of providing clear information to tenants about the repairs service, to ensure that the information is easily accessible and to enable the maintenance service to use resources effectively. The Repairs Guide was produced and distributed to all tenants, and comments on its usefulness has validated its importance and worth.

- **Ynys Môn County Council**

Once WHQS work began on Anglesey, it was suggested by the WHQS Tenants Panel to produce a DVD that explains to tenants what to expect when WHQS work is being done on their homes. The DVD enables tenants to see "real" tenants have "real" work being done and also includes tenants' testimonials who have had work done. The DVD has been a success in increasing the customer satisfaction ratings with tenants feeling more confident of work being carried out on their homes.

- **Tai Cymdogaeth Cyf**

Tai Cymdogaeth's aim was to produce an updated, user-friendly, easy to read Tenants Information Pack that contained all necessary information needed by tenants and to ensure that tenants had an input into the project. The new fully bilingual pack is concise, clear and consists of 2 booklets: the Tenants Information Pack and the Useful Contacts booklet – both of which are available as paper, online, CD, Braille and large print versions.

- **Cymdeithas Tai Clwyd – Tenants Day**

Cymdeithas Tai Clwyd have held an annual Tenants Day since 2002 with a handful of people that were generally over 60 years of age. In 2007, the focus of the day changed to attract a more diverse range of tenants – the day was made more family orientated with activities for all ages. The 2009 Tenants Day proved to be the most successful yet with a total of 177 tenants attending. There were opportunities for delegates to take part in numerous consultations and interviews, meet staff, attend workshops or visit the Health, Beauty or Craft Corners as well as a 'Tai Clwyd's Got Talent' Competition. A DVD of the day was produced full of the day's activities and interviews with tenants reflecting on the day.

- **Newydd Housing Association**

Newydd Housing Association's tenant run Community Panel set up the Newydd Equality & Disability Sub-Group (NEADS) in order to address equality and disability issues for the tenants. The NEADS group recognised that there was a significant literacy problem amongst the tenants and the lack of information could be causing problems on estates. The group decided and arranged for a DVD version of the Tenants Handbook to be developed and it is hoped that it will have a direct effect on the quality of life for those tenants and indeed the quality of life on the communities.

- **Family Housing Association**

Historically, Family Housing Association's newsletter has always been landlord led and used as a vehicle to communicate and inform tenants. An appeal was made for staff and tenants who were interested in forming an editorial group and a team of 2 tenants and 4 staff was established with the aim of improving the newsletter and making it more relevant to tenants. A staff member from Supported Housing sits on the Editorial Group facilitating a link with the Supported Housing Tenants that wanted to contribute.

- **Clwyd Alyn Housing Association - 'ResFest' Supported Living Conference'**

Clwyd Alyn Housing Association has worked with the active involvement of service users in a unique way to ensure their views and suggestions are heard. The method used was a multi-faceted Supported Living tenants' conference – 'ResFest'. After a small scale event took place in October 2008, Clwyd Alyn's first Supported Living Conference was held in 2009 as a springboard for genuine and meaningful service user involvement. Various items were produced for 'ResFest' delegates which included USB Wristbands for personal data storage, a 'ResFest' badge as a memento of the event and a DVD of the event to remind them of the fun they had and to act as publicity for new service users.

- **Cymdeithas Tai Eryri**

'Active' was developed to focus on tenants that wanted to take part by looking at what they've achieved and how their contribution has led to changes within the organisation. 'Active' looks at the tenants as potential tenant activists and has used some methods that campaign groups have used to encourage people to participate. This bilingual, colourful newsletter, which is also available on CD and Braille, supports the organisation's main emphasis on tenant participation which is offering a menu of options whereby tenants can choose their own level of commitment. The number of tenants involved in the production of 'Active' has more than doubled in the past year.

- **Wales & West Housing Association**

The Residents' Handbook is given to all new residents at the beginning of their tenancy and it contains useful information to help them manage their tenancies and sources of support that may help them in their personal lives. The Association wanted to update the handbook and a focus group of residents were invited to review the current handbook and come up with ideas on how to improve it. The new handbook has been re-written based on the residents' feedback and it is now much more user friendly.

- **Cymdeithas Tai Clwyd – Calendar**

Cymdeithas Tai Clwyd thought it was a good idea to produce a calendar for their tenants that would highlight all important dates and events relevant to the Association's annual activities. The calendar has been produced to make it as useful and as relevant as possible to tenants by including useful information each month on a variety of topics including how to get involved with the Association, Home Safety, Financial Inclusion, Home Insurance, Low Cost

ownership and lots more. As a result of the calendar, the number of people attending events has increased as all meeting dates are on the calendar and tenants feel more aware of what goes on and what work is being done.

- **Monmouthshire Housing Association**

'Tenant Matters' is a tenant newsletter that is locally relevant, attractive and informative. Its aim is to reflect what tenants want in a newsletter, whilst at the same time being corporately acceptable to Monmouthshire Housing Association. It also aims to involve tenants as much as possible by tenants being an integral part of the design, content and production. The newsletter is offered to tenants in different formats such as large print, Braille, tape, welsh and is also available electronically via the Association's website.

- **Charter Housing Association**

In October 2009, Charter Housing replaced their logo with a newer, fresher modern one that better reflects the organisation. They have developed a brand and language that expresses their warm, friendly personality which is simple to use and looks great. What they say and how they say it is very important to their tenants therefore Charter wanted to be consistent. A brand book has been developed to help all staff implement the new branding and to ensure that the message is consistent. The new branding has addressed the concerns about their communication not being easy to understand.

- **RCT Homes**

The 'Word on the Street' competition was launched to give young people between 12-21 a chance to shout about their street or neighbourhood and let everyone know why they love living there. After choosing 3 finalist groups they were trained to make their own short films about where they live. The competition culminated with an event where the young people were chauffeured down to walk the red carpet and watch the premier of their films with family, friends, RCT Homes staff and members of the press. At the premiere, the applause resounded around the building for a job well done by 2 teams of youngsters that RCT can be justifiably proud of.

- **North Wales Housing**

The main aim of the bilingual 2010 Calendar was to provide tenants with information regarding NWH services and sign post them to the relevant departments/staff members. The idea for a calendar came from an analysis that NWH carried out during their 'Round A Rownd' estate visits. As well as these visit dates, the calendar also contains dates of regular tenant activities that have been planned and each month the calendar highlights some of the services provided. This enables tenants to see key facts at a glance along with contact details should they need further information. The calendar has been an efficient tool in getting relevant information across in a brief and attractive format.

VAL FELD WALES COMMUNICATION IN HOUSING - TENANT

- **Cynon Taff Tenants Forum**

The Tenants' Forum felt that once the Tenant Participation Strategy had been implemented and the Tenant Participation Compact was no longer required, there was a gap in information provided to tenants about how they could be involved. An information leaflet, 'Getting Involved' was designed for this purpose and as a tool for encouraging more involvement. The information provided in the leaflet is widely available, jargon free and is available for download on the Cynon Tâf website. 'Getting Involved' is used at each

customer satisfaction visit carried for tenants who have been in their property for 6 months to promote the options available.

- **First Choice Housing Association**

First Choice Housing Association has created a Tenant Editorial Group to improve the content, style and structure of its Tenant Newsletter so that it can evolve along with the interests of their tenants. The newsletter has been redeveloped with the content more tenant focused and tenants encouraged to provide information about their lives, holidays or even their favourite recipe. As First Choice Housing Association's tenants have a learning disability or additional complex needs, the newsletter is produced in an accessible format so that it is understandable to all.

- **Llys Faen Residents Association**

The Residents Association has been producing this informative, quarterly newsletter since April 2006 when the Association was successful in gaining a grant to purchase a computer. Just 7 months after using a computer for the first time, 72 year old Clive edits the newsletter which is delivered to every resident on the scheme. The newsletter provides a lifeline to the residents who are unable to join in activities through disability or ill health and keeps them in touch with what is going on at the scheme.

- **Barracksfield Tenants Association / Youth Committee**

Most of the information in the BAFTA newsletter come from the BAFTA meetings and the Vice Chair of the group also is a member of the Neighbourhood Police Panel, who have provided a quote for a recent newsletter. Other residents and staff often contribute articles to the newsletters for example the Housing Association regularly provides articles on useful information for residents and uses the newsletter to promote dates of future site audits etc. The newsletter includes colour, photos and logos which makes it eye catching and easy to read.

RUTH RADLEY OUTSTANDING ACHIEVEMENT IN PARTICIPATION

- **Jaqui Smith**

Jaqui first experienced the benefits of tenant participation 4 years ago and is now Chair of Hafan Cymru's Cardiff & Vale Focus Group and an enthusiastic participant in the WAG programme 'Step up Cymru'. In addition, Jaqui is a long standing volunteer for Victim Support and also carries out voluntary work in a local charity shop. The hard work, commitment and dedication Jaqui has shown in taking participation forward in her role as Chair has been invaluable in promoting the needs of disadvantaged groups at external events and through the community work she does as a volunteer.

- **Kel Palmer**

After becoming a tenant on the Fernhill estate, Kel immediately got involved with the Voluntary Sector in his retirement and over the last few years has been involved in up to 21 organisation and attends in excess of 20 meetings per month. Kel has incredible energy and despite the age difference, he dedicates a lot of his time and energy on the young people to help them realise their true potential. His drive, energy and enthusiasm is infectious and continues to campaign tirelessly behind the scenes to rid the estate of the criminal fraternity that occurs.

- **Stella Wheeler**

Stella was nominated and elected as the representative of her sheltered scheme and was elected Chair of RCT Homes, a position she is particularly proud of. In 2004 when the preparation to transfer the homes of RCT council began, Stella became the ever present member of the various tenant review groups, working tirelessly to ensure tenants explored all possible avenues. Always making herself available, and sometimes at very short notice, she demonstrated a personal trait that is very difficult not to admire. Stella's drive and commitment is a shining example to staff and tenants alike.

- **Elwyn Dunster**

Elwyn has been actively volunteering in his local community for 20 years, working to improve the community. Since his first taste of involvement and sharing of skills, Elwyn's engagement in his local community has grown considerably and his level of influence and responsibility has increased greatly with his evolving community role. Elwyn became a member of his TRA 13 years ago and tackled many issues before becoming further involved by volunteering with the local Boys and Girls Club, sharing his skills with the young people. Also a member of various V2C panels, Elwyn became a Community Councillor and is very much a community champion.

- **Lyn Wilkinson Owen**

Lyn has contributed to the Association's work for 8 years, campaigning for improvements on her estate. Within a year, the Association agreed to spend £360,000 on improvements for the estate and Lyn was instrumental as the Tenant Group representative. Since then, she has been part of the Community House on the estate and has joined the Cymdeithas Tai Eryri Board and Tenant Participation Working Group and has developed to play a prominent role with the Welsh Tenants Federation.

- **Kevin Greedy**

Kevin was instrumental in setting up his local TRA and is still extremely active in organising trips and working alongside the Association in addressing issues such as enhancing resident participation and helping address incidents of ASB. Kevin has successfully linked up with external agencies to secure various funding to organise day trips and improve facilities in the area. In 2004, he became a Community Health Development Worker for the healthy living project and was one of the founders who organised a project to promote '5 a day'. Despite ill health, Kevin has dedicated his time to making a difference at an Associate wide level and is an active member of the Resident Participation Steering Group.

- **David Davies**

David has been involved in participation at both a local and national level over 10 years where on a national level he began as a member of the Tenants Panel which later became the Residents Forum and the Residents Participation Steering Group. At a local level, David was the founder member of his local residents association and has filled many of the committee roles. With David's support, the Residents Association work tirelessly to support local charities and have held open days and Christmas Fairs to raise money. Despite his hectic lifestyle of attending meetings and good work, David is always in good humour and pleasant to work with.

- **Jenny Hughes**

Jenny became involved with her local Residents Association in 2002 and was instrumental in the extension and refurbishment of the community centre. Seeing that there was a lack

of children's activities, Jenny set up the Kidz Club where she personally leads on the activities. More recently she began a homework club and is currently fundraising for computers for the Centre to enable those without such facilities at home to have access at the Centre. Jenny is heavily involved in organising fun days, discos and parties which are always well attended and balancing her job, family life and such commitment to her community cannot be an easy task. Her tireless effort and dedication has shown no bounds and her commitment to the children's activities has been staggering.

ROY PARRY MAINSTREAMING TENANT PARTICIPATION

▪ Newydd Housing Association

Newydd Housing Association's tenant involvement work has focused on embedding tenants at the heart of the organisation's structure. This year the work has been completed by the development of the Tenants Scrutiny Group which has direct access to the Board and National Assembly and is able to directly improve services. This project has been known as the 'Inspect Project' whereby Mystery Shoppers were recruited to test the service standards and report back to the Community Panel. All of Newydd's tenants have benefited and now have an effective route to get involved in whatever format they choose.

▪ Cymdeithas Tai Cantref

Cantref have recently undergone a restructure following tenant consultation with the main aim to improve services to tenants by being more efficient, which is why the area team option was favoured. The LTPS also highlights the importance of mainstreaming tenant participation throughout the organisation. Each team within Cantref are keen to attend tenants' events and are aware of the value of participation to the services. Cantref hold a staff challenge day with the theme this year being 'Tenants First'. The Tenants First Groups have been instrumental in recognising issues within Cantref that would not have been addressed otherwise.

▪ North Wales Housing – 'Round a Rownd'

Following consultation events with residents, the Association was getting a clear message that the residents wanted to see more staff out and about on estates hence the introduction of the 'Round a Rownd' initiative. As well as increasing staff presence on estates and identifying areas for attention, one of the main aims of the initiative was to develop and encourage greater communication between staff and tenants. The implementation of the initiative has helped staff reach out to those tenants who tend not to participate or actively communicate with NWH regarding service improvements and has also provided a solid foundation for the gathering and analysis of information from tenants.

▪ Plas Gorffwysfa Residents Association

Plas Gorffwysfa Residents Association mainly consists of residents over 70 years of age. Three years ago, they worked hard to open up a Kabin on their estate to hold various events. The aim of the project was to involve all residents in activities on the estate from coffee mornings, games evening and craft sessions to fundraising events, trips and gardening. The residents regularly help each other out with shopping, cooking and other chores which brings the scheme members even closer together.

▪ RCT Homes – 'Sound as a Pound'

'Sound as a Pound' represents all tenant focussed activities that the financial inclusion group manage. The group is responsible for developing, training, mainstreaming and implementing

financial inclusion under this scheme. The branding is separate from the rest of the organisation to create a standalone, dedicated and user friendly scheme to tenants. RCT Homes' main issue when looking to address financial inclusion through the 'Sound as a Pound' brand is how to communicate the information to tenants in an easily understandable format, ensuring tenants are comfortable and confident enough to engage in support when needed.

- **United Welsh Housing Association – 'TP Champions'**

In 2008, UWHA began the development and implementation of its first Tenant Participation Strategy and in order to ensure the success of the strategy, the key objective would be to mainstream tenant participation activities across all areas of the business and to embed tenant participation into the day to day work for all staff. A Monitoring Group with representatives (Team Champions) developed pledges detailing how their teams would work with tenants. These pledges were used as a basis for any action plan which was then split between each department to monitor its progress. This means that each team understands how TP is relevant to their role, and can see improvements in service delivery within their own teams, as a result.

- **RCT Homes**

Tenant Participation is firmly embedded within RCT Homes and their Tenant Empowerment Team are at the heart of their remit, responsible for engaging with tenants, providing help, support and training needed to become actively involved in the running of the organisation. To ensure tenants are fully involved in the running of RCT Homes, they have developed a unique feature in that Tenant Liaison Officers are in-house and are employed by RCT Homes and not the contractors, which is the normal process. RCT Homes is committed to providing the best services to its tenants, keeping the tenant as 'champion' at all times ensuring the organisation flourishes with tenants at the forefront.

- **Clwyd Alyn Housing Association – 'ResFest' Supported Living Conference'**

Clwyd Alyn Housing Association has worked with the active involvement of service users in a unique way to ensure their views and suggestions are heard. The method used was a multi-faceted Supported Living tenants' conference – 'ResFest'. After a small scale event took place in October 2008, Clwyd Alyn's first Supported Living Conference was held in 2009 as a springboard for genuine and meaningful service user involvement. Various items were produced for 'ResFest' delegates which included USB Wristbands for personal data storage, a 'ResFest' badge as a memento of the event and a DVD of the event to remind them of the fun they had and to act as publicity for new service users.

- **Cymdeithas Tai Clwyd**

Tenant Participation has always been at the heart of Cymdeithas Tai Clwyd's work and is a priority in their Strategic Plan which has enabled the association to work towards mainstreaming TP throughout their work. Examples of that work include: The Tenant Participation Working Group whose main purpose is to ensure that TP is central to all of the association's activities; TP Champions have been elected from each department to ensure that all TP activities are integrated within all functions; TP Training for staff and Board Members; Increased funding in the TP Budget; Changes in personnel procedures; Staff Skills Audit; Tenants Day; Roadshows; and a Review Format of Board Papers and Publications.

- **Cymdeithas Tai Eryri**

Cymdeithas Tai Eryri's Initiatives Team's hours were increased with a view to look more strategically at developing tenant participation. The association has developed many ways in which the tenants can get more involved: door to door surveys, one on one interviews, focus groups, tenant participation working group, tenants forum, various panels and specific meetings for tenants on matters that affect them. The association offers childcare and travelling expenses and offers lifts and translation services at tenant meetings.

- **Monmouthshire Housing Association**

The Tenant Participation Toolkit is designed for staff to be able to use as a handy, comprehensive reference and checklist manual to carry out their functions of tenant participation in their daily routines as members of staff. This enhances the work undertaken by the Local Tenant Participation Working Group in mainstreaming tenant participation throughout the whole organisation. As part of the launch of the Toolkit, all MHA staff were involved in TP Training in order to be aware of the issues associated with the subject and how they can improve the way they engage tenants. It can be safely said that the toolkit has significantly improved the mainstreaming of Tenant Participation within Monmouthshire Housing Association.

TENANT PARTICIPATION PROJECTS

- **Newtown Tenants & Residents Association – Community Centre**

The TRA, in partnership with other organisations, commissioned a research project and various consultation events were held. Socially it was felt there were no facilities on the estate leading to general feeling of exclusion and isolation. The survey highlighted the need for a generic community centre, adult education opportunities, facilities for young people and a 'community café'. The group was awarded funding from the Big Lottery Fund and Heads of the Valleys Regeneration Project and fundraised tirelessly for the rest of the money needed. The centre was opened in August 2009 and caters for individuals and groups of all ages with numerous events/activities being held on a daily basis.

- **Cymdeithas Tai Cantref – 'Play Sessions'**

The general feeling on the estates was that there were no playing facilities locally for children and following various residents' meetings, it was agreed that the way forward was to employ play workers to facilitate activities with children on the estates. The play workers would allow the children and parents to take part in whatever they wished to and were given equipment to prompt them to play, cook, paint or just have fun. The play area has brought the community closer together and has tackled the issue of lack of children's facilities thus reducing occurrences of Anti Social Behaviour.

- **Caia Park Housing Sub Group**

The Caia Park Housing Group have completed a comprehensive project consulting with over 5000 residents and testing local opinion on partial stock transfer and setting up a Tenants Management Organisation on completion of the initial project. They were keen to ensure that everyone were kept informed about progress and meetings were held with local authorities, WAG and CIH Cymru. The sub-group are now in the process of applying for funding to complete the 'Pre-feasibility' stage of the Right to Manage process.

- **Newydd Housing Association – ‘Inspect Project’**

The ‘Inspect Project’ was developed to ensure all tenants had access to be able to influence and improve services across the Association. In 2007 Community Panels were developed and in 2008 the Association implemented tenant led Mystery Shopping to test the services. In 2009, the Association developed the Tenant Powered Performance to implement a set of performance indicators tailored to tenants’ requirements. The ‘Inspect Project’ intends to combine these elements and build on them to deliver a system of full tenant’s scrutiny by the end of 2010/11.

- **Charter Tenants Online Group**

The Online group recognises that one third of Charter’s tenants are online and that increasingly, their preferred method of communication is via email. Not all tenants can and want to attend meetings therefore the online group allows tenants to be involved in decisions at a time that suits them and from the comfort of their own home. With 44 members in the group, they have developed and tested functions on Charter’s new website and have been involved in various consultations.

- **Jubilee Gardens Gardening Club**

The general appearance of the scheme and front gardens was a little uninspiring and the main aim of this gardening project was to encourage residents to take ownership of their local environment whilst improving the general appearance of the estate and reducing litter. Although obtaining funding was unsuccessful the residents were fortunate to receive donations from their grounds maintenance contractor and a discount from the local Garden Centre. Tenants and children alike took part in the recycling and litter picking sessions, hanging basket workshops, flowerpot painting and the manual work of digging and planting resulting in stunning looking gardens to be proud of.

- **Chips n Chat Group – ‘Arson Rap Project’**

The Arson Rap project was led by the South Wales Fire and Rescue services for the Chips n Chat tenant group. The target group for the project were the young people who are socially excluded or live in disadvantaged areas. The project consisted of 4 sessions highlighting the dangers of car crime, fire and anti social behaviour and the final session was the fun part where the young people got together to create their piece of art. The sessions worked on education as well as promoting confidence building and team working. Feedback on the type of creative project the young people wanted to do resulted in the group creating their own rap.

- **Clwyd Alyn Housing Association – ‘ResFest’ Supported Living Conference’**

Clwyd Alyn Housing Association has worked with the active involvement of service users in a unique way to ensure their views and suggestions are heard. The method used was a multi-faceted Supported Living tenants’ conference – ‘ResFest’. After a small scale event took place in October 2008, Clwyd Alyn’s first Supported Living Conference was held in 2009 as a springboard for genuine and meaningful service user involvement. Various items were produced for ‘ResFest’ delegates which included USB Wristbands for personal data storage, a ‘ResFest’ badge as a memento of the event and a DVD of the event to remind them of the fun they had and to act as publicity for new service users.

- **Sirhowy Tenants & Residents Association**

Following the closure of their local school in 2008 and high levels of anti social behaviour, the TRA have worked relentlessly to secure funding to aid the development of a community facility in the area. The STAR centre’s official opening was packed with various

activities and the group have worked hard to organise a timetable of activities at the Centre to benefit the whole community. Activities include workshops, courses, food co-op, theme parties, drop-in sessions, war hammer games workshop as well as activities throughout the school holidays.

▪ **Clwyd Alyn Housing Association – ‘Greenbank Villas’**

The inception of the garden project at Greenbank Villas goes back to mid 2007 when service users felt that the garden could be enhanced. That year, the service users cleared the garden and planted some vegetables and over the winter months further plans were made to not only have a vegetable patch but also a nice place to sit as well as hold events/activities. It was decided that the work would not only be done by “experts” but the service users would actively take part. Service users continue to have full involvement in the ongoing planning of activities and they are currently preparing to complete the roof over the decking area and the garden has become a focal point of Greenbank Villas life.

▪ **Barrackfield Tenants Association / Youth Committee – Multi Use Games Area Project**

With no outdoor play facilities, Barrackfield Tenants Association and Youth Committee felt the need for a multi use games area which could incorporate a variety of games facilities in a safe environment. As well as some grant funding, BFTA and the Youth Committee decided to raise the shortfall needed to make this happen. In preparation for the MUGA, annual estate clean ups and litter picks have been held and a big launch event will be held with players from the Crusaders rugby team invited along. The MUGA will be home to a range of supervised activities as well as open-access play and will also be a focus for intergenerational activities.

▪ **Taff Housing Association – ‘Back2Basics’**

Back2Basics is a 3 year programme funded through the SHMG Programme that takes a holistic and positive approach to the problem of anti social behaviour. The Taff team worked with partners and service providers to devise a well-rounded activities programme which specifically focussed on health and well-being, the environment and art. Examples include Re-Start Bus (double decker play bus), Dr Bike (free bike repairs) and street based art projects. Following the project there is an increase in the range of physical activities for tenants, it has promoted positive participation, reduced localised apathy, encouraged community cohesion and reduced anti social behaviour.

▪ **RCT Homes – ‘Action Camp’**

RCT Homes joined forces with Young Wales and Coalfields Regeneration Trust to provide over 300 Action Camp places for young people. Action Camp is a 3 day activity camp for young people between 11-18 and they provide the opportunity to have a holiday, make new friends, share new experiences while gaining an ASDAN short course award. The Action Camp aimed to address child poverty, education, ASB, healthy living and volunteering while the activities included financial literacy, team building, fair trade, traffic survey, litter picking, food miles, environment, cooking on a budget and bush tucker trials.

▪ **Cymdeithas Tai Cantref – ‘Tenants Training’**

The main aim of the programme was to provide skills for tenants to help them develop in their work or social life. A training analysis was carried out to see what training tenants wanted and available courses were identified. The range of courses varied from Raising Financially Confident Kids to Basic Book Keeping to Writing Newsletters. Excellent partnership working relationships have been gained and all the tenants have increased

confidence and knowledge that they would not have otherwise been able to receive without the free training.

EMPOWERING PEOPLE TO IMPROVE SERVICES-TENANTS & RESIDENTS IN ACTION

▪ **Newydd Housing Association – ‘Tenants Powered Performance Group’**

The Tenant Powered Performance Team is a group of committed and interested tenants whose aim is to develop performance information regarding the services that Newydd Housing Association provides that is useful and accessible. The TPP team tackle each area of service and develop performance indicators that THEY want to see and analyse – often putting aside indicators that the landlord may have used to demonstrate success in the past. This project has enabled the Scrutiny Group to highlight where improvements need to be made.

▪ **Family Housing Association**

The aim of the project was to establish a group of tenants interested in becoming Tenant Inspectors and to develop a set of service standards. From the existing Tenants Panel, 8 tenants felt they would like to proceed to the next level and were provided with intensive training, which the Panel lobbied relentlessly to obtain the funding to pay for it. In a short time, the Assessors have already made an impact and helping the Association develop service standards has been an important piece of work.

▪ **Ynys Môn County Council – ‘WHQS Group’**

In 2006 all Cyngor Sir Ynys Môn’s tenants were encouraged to get involved with the WHQS improvement programme. As the programme was going to impact the lives of tenants in more ways than one, the council were keen to get a group of tenants involved with many of the decisions. The WHQS Group was established and tenant and community consultation has been central to the WHQS Programme and has made it the success it is today. The group meet once a month to monitor and discuss the feedback from the customer satisfaction forms and are able to make suggestions on how to improve the service.

▪ **Solas Cymru**

Solas’ resident participation & implementation plan evidences how they have committed to ensuring that the people they support are central to how they work. Over the past 6 months, Solas have appointed a Resident Participation Manager so that the organisation can become more efficient and effective at responding to residents needs, circumstances and overcoming the barriers to the process of engagement. Solas have worked relentlessly with residents who have been particularly hard to reach and have adapted their working practices to ensure that they are flexible and open to ideas about positive methods of engagement.

▪ **Hafan Cymru**

Hafan Cymru’s Blaenau Gwent Project Board was established with the aim to work in partnership in the planning, design and development of a refuge. An ex service user, Alma, kindly agreed to become a member of the project along with other members from Hafan Cymru and other organisations. Alma was key to investigating current examples of best practice visiting refuges in other areas and reporting her findings back to the Board. She was also involved in the process of planning, design/layout and purchase of internal fixtures/fittings, having had first hand experience of refuge accommodation.

- **Bernard Allen**

An electric charging unit is now available in Charter Housing's reception area where tenants and members of the public are able to recharge their electric wheelchairs and mini scooter batteries free of charge. The charging unit was donated by Bernard Allen who is not only a key member of Charter's Disability Group but also another disability group called DOORS. Bernard highlighted that electric wheelchair users faces difficulties getting around the city due to the lack of charging facilities available and also explained how many users were not making the most of their wheelchairs due to the fear of running out of power. Bernard is now campaigning with Newport City Council to get more charging units out in venues around the city to make the city completely accessible.

- **Penucheldre, Holyhead**

Cymdeithas Tai Eryri have been working with other agencies on Anglesey to develop a scheme for older people on the island. The location of the scheme is Penucheldre, Holyhead where there are 34 flats for older people in a support centre and 25 sheltered housing units. The £8million scheme included demolishing the existing flats and building new units with community facilities to reflect the independent living of older people today. Tenants have had their say in the scheme via one to one interviews, regular meetings, a Board member living on site as well as the opportunity to see similar developments, learn valuable lessons and meet with contractors.

- **Clwyd Alyn Housing Association – 'Greenbank Villas'**

The inception of the garden project at Greenbank Villas goes back to mid 2007 when service users felt that the garden could be enhanced. That year, the service users cleared the garden and planted some vegetables and over the winter months further plans were made to not only have a vegetable patch but also a nice place to sit as well as hold events/activities. It was decided that the work would not only be done by "experts" but the service users would actively take part. Service users continue to have full involvement in the ongoing planning of activities and they are currently preparing to complete the roof over the decking area and the garden has become a focal point of Greenbank Villas life.

- **RCT Homes – 'Sound as a Pound'**

'Sound as a Pound' represents all tenant focussed activities that the financial inclusion group manage. The group is responsible for developing, training, mainstreaming and implementing financial inclusion under this scheme. The branding is separate from the rest of the organisation to create a standalone, dedicated and user friendly scheme to tenants. RCT Homes' main issue when looking to address financial inclusion through the 'Sound as a Pound' brand is how to communicate the information to tenants in an easily understandable format, ensuring tenants are comfortable and confident enough to engage in support when needed.

- **Cwrt Angorfa Residents Association**

The Cwrt Angorfa Residents Association is a remarkable group of older people who have worked together since 2003 to benefit the residents on the scheme, the wider community and other people across the world. The group organises many activities from coffee mornings to line dancing to fish and chip lunches. The group have also been successful in accessing grants for equipment to benefit the scheme's residents and have raised hundreds of pounds for various charities. The Residents Association are a positive, good natured group of people who continually work together despite their personal issues.

- **Clwyd Alyn Housing Association – ‘Quality Partners’**

The Quality Partners are tenants who have volunteered to train to inspect the services Clwyd Alyn Housing Association provides and make recommendations for improvements to those services. Established originally formed in 2004, a new set of Quality Partners were recruited in 2007 with a further 8 new recruits having recently commenced training. The Quality Partners decided to embark on an inspection of CAHA’s day to day repairs and the challenge is to put personal experience to one side and explore wider tenant views on the services. The work is time consuming and resource intensive but at the same time very rewarding.

- **Cymryd Rhan – ‘REACH Reviewers Team’**

The aim of the REACH team is to ensure that each of the 11 standards are being fulfilled and to ensure that the individuals are happy with the service. The REACH standards were customised for the specific group that were being trained – information had to be accessible and delivered in an environment that maximised learning for the group. Support for participants was vital and in terms of the effectiveness of the longer term work of the group, it was important to have the same people working with the group throughout. As a result of the training, Cymryd Rhan has a team of people who are in an informed position, have the skills to review a supported living service and who feel empowered to draw conclusions about its quality and the skills to be heard.

- **Taff Housing / Cardiff Community Housing Association / Cadwyn Housing Association**

The aim of this joint project was to establish a group of people representing tenants and residents from BME groups in Cardiff. The group is consulted upon in matters of policy and procedures and offer advice on services and how they affect BME communities. As the group members are from a variety of cultural and religious backgrounds, each of the partners’ services to their BME communities has improved. Community groups have had the benefit of learning about various housing and related issues from a member of their own community who represents them at meetings with the partner Associations.

- **North Wales Housing – ‘Asset Management Panel’**

When the Maintenance Department was re-named as the Asset Management Team, it was decided that it would be beneficial to appoint a panel of resident volunteers to meet regularly with key officers of the team in order to gain a more ‘hands-on’ role in influencing the development of the service. The panel was established and through a TEG Grant received extensive training over 6 months. The panel have since agreed a programme of activities based on tenants’ priorities and preferences and have also worked on establishing mechanisms to monitor and evaluate all activities and their impact on service delivery.

- **RCT Homes – ‘Action Camp’**

RCT Homes joined forces with Young Wales and Coalfields Regeneration Trust to provide over 300 Action Camp places for young people. Action Camp is a 3 day activity camp for young people between 11-18 and they provide the opportunity to have a holiday, make new friends, share new experiences while gaining an ASDAN short course award. The Action Camp aimed to address child poverty, education, ASB, healthy living and volunteering while the activities included financial literacy, team building, fair trade, traffic survey, litter picking, food miles, environment, cooking on a budget and bush tucker trials.

ACTIVE INCLUSION

▪ **First Choice Housing Association**

First Choice Housing Association has created a Tenant Editorial Group to improve the content, style and structure of its Tenant Newsletter so that it can evolve along with the interests of their tenants. The newsletter has been redeveloped with the content more tenant focused and tenants encouraged to provide information about their lives, holidays or even their favourite recipe. As First Choice Housing Association's tenants have a learning disability or additional complex needs, the newsletter is produced in an accessible format so that it is understandable to all.

▪ **Hafan Cymru**

With a view to taking Hafan Cymru's commitment to take tenant participation forward and following consultation between staff and service users, the Cardiff & Vale Focus Group was established. The purpose of the group is to act as a representative body of Hafan Cymru service users and to provide an opportunity for them to consult of Hafan Cymru's policies, procedures and improvements. The group has been enthusiastic and proactive in leading the way in a number of areas such as organising events and providing suggestions for various Hafan Cymru's documentation. The mutually recognised benefits of the group are such that Hafan Cymru is promoting the group as a model to take to other regions.

▪ **Clwyd Alyn Housing Association – 'ResFest' Supported Living Conference'**

Clwyd Alyn Housing Association has worked with the active involvement of service users in a unique way to ensure their views and suggestions are heard. The method used was a multi-faceted Supported Living tenants' conference – 'ResFest'. After a small scale event took place in October 2008, Clwyd Alyn's first Supported Living Conference was held in 2009 as a springboard for genuine and meaningful service user involvement. Various items were produced for 'ResFest' delegates which included USB Wristbands for personal data storage, a 'ResFest' badge as a memento of the event and a DVD of the event to remind them of the fun they had and to act as publicity for new service users.

▪ **Newport City Homes – 'City Streetz'**

City Streetz was a week long programme that used the medium of dance and hip hop activities as a vehicle to increase higher education participation by raising aspirations, and creating new study opportunities and learning about pathways to higher education. The techniques used helped the young people achieve the level of performance in other areas of work and the pinnacle part of the week was a performance of the routines and acts the young people had composed.

▪ **RCT Homes – 'Word on the Street'**

The 'Word on the Street' competition was launched to give young people between 12-21 a chance to shout about their street or neighbourhood and let everyone know why they love living there. After choosing 3 finalist groups they were trained to make their own short films about where they live. The competition culminated with an event where the young people were chauffeured down to walk the red carpet and watch the premier of their films with family, friends, RCT Homes staff and members of the press. At the premiere, the applause resounded around the building for a job well done by 2 teams of youngsters that RCT can be justifiably proud of.

- **Cymdeithas Tai Cantref**

The aim of the work was to show tenants and partners in the community the work that Cantref carry out and show the innovative ways to participation. Cantref decided to produce a film which would be the best way of portraying the work they do. Groups who had previously expressed an interest in film work were invited to take part with the chosen film production company to gain experience. The film crew were very good and interacted well with tenants to get their views and the DVD is now used as a way of communicating Cantref's work to a number of target groups and businesses. Tenants are able to see the variety of options for taking part and more importantly it has been a great way of getting the message across to tenants via 'real' people.

- **Clwyd Alyn Housing Association – 'Greenbank Villas'**

The inception of the garden project at Greenbank Villas goes back to mid 2007 when service users felt that the garden could be enhanced. That year, the service users cleared the garden and planted some vegetables and over the winter months further plans were made to not only have a vegetable patch but also a nice place to sit as well as hold events/activities. It was decided that the work would not only be done by "experts" but the service users would actively take part. Service users continue to have full involvement in the ongoing planning of activities and they are currently preparing to complete the roof over the decking area and the garden has become a focal point of Greenbank Villas life.

- **Cymryd Rhan – 'REACH Reviewers Team'**

The aim of the REACH team is to ensure that each of the 11 standards are being fulfilled and to ensure that the individuals are happy with the service. The REACH standards were customised for the specific group that were being trained – information had to be accessible and delivered in an environment that maximised learning for the group. Support for participants was vital and in terms of the effectiveness of the longer term work of the group, it was important to have the same people working with the group throughout. As a result of the training, Cymryd Rhan has a team of people who are in an informed position, have the skills to review a supported living service and who feel empowered to draw conclusions about its quality and the skills to be heard.

- **Charter Housing Association – 'Customer Champions Group'**

Customer Champions are Charter's in-house group of key representatives from all of Charter's teams who are there to ensure they drive forward their tenant involvement activities. The Customer Champions Group address the issue of mainstreaming tenant participation and each member feeds back how they have involved tenants and customers as well as good practice examples to help address any issues they may have. The group have developed their new in-house letter writing guide, organised 4 tenant fun days, arranged an older person's day and much much more.

- **Taff Housing Association – 'Get Involved'**

The 'Get Involved' project is a series of 4 quarterly events which aim to allow tenants the opportunity to learn what joining a group is all about, increase membership of tenants and enable different tenant groups to meet each other. They also aimed to consult with the tenants about what groups they wanted to develop and deliver training to tenants. The suggestion board revealed a host of special interest groups that tenants wanted to develop and since the first 'Get Involved' event, the following groups have been developed: gardening club, knitting group and women & children's group.

- **RCT Homes – ‘Action Camp’**

RCT Homes joined forces with Young Wales and Coalfields Regeneration Trust to provide over 300 Action Camp places for young people. Action Camp is a 3 day activity camp for young people between 11-18 and they provide the opportunity to have a holiday, make new friends, share new experiences while gaining an ASDAN short course award. The Action Camp aimed to address child poverty, education, ASB, healthy living and volunteering while the activities included financial literacy, team building, fair trade, traffic survey, litter picking, food miles, environment, cooking on a budget and bush tucker trials.

SUCCESSFUL PARTICIPATION IN RURAL AREAS

- **Ynys Môn County Council**

Tenants living in rural areas of the island were at a disadvantage due to the fact that there was a lack of transport facilities and no suitable venues to hold the WHQS Open Days. Therefore rather than exclude the rural tenants, the Council decided to purchase a mobile display unit and fitted it with all the kitchen and bathroom colour choices. The main aim of the WHQS mobile display unit was to ensure the Open Days were more accessible and encouraged 100% attendance from the tenants living in all areas where the work was being done. The mobile unit is now used in all areas rather than having the additional cost of hiring venues and as a result the contractor is going to the tenants rather than vice versa.

- **Cymdeithas Tai Cantref**

The aim of the ‘You & Cantref’ surgeries is to have an increase in participation with tenants living in rural areas. Although residents meetings are held in different areas, participation is never high so Cantref felt they should go to the tenants rather than expecting tenants to go to them. The ‘You & Cantref’ sessions have been designed to allow tenants to report and review day to day repairs, estate and community ideas/issues, anti social behaviour problems, to view and pay rent, housing applications and allocations and to meet staff and build relationships. Surgeries are held at various times and days and based on feedback from tenants and staff.

INSPIRATIONAL COLLEAGUE

- **Michelle Llewelyn, Hafod Housing Association**

Michelle is a committed development worker who works hard to support many activities and events that take place in Thornhill and beyond and although her remit is very wide her role requires her to support Hafod Tenants over a wide geographical area. The tenants that have worked with Michelle know there will be a beginning, middle and end to every piece of work and her dedication and commitment is clear in whichever task she undertakes. The logistics of managing a family, university and a job needs great organisational skills but Michelle does this with determination and motivation and always with a smile on her face.

- **Ann Costanza, Cynon Taff Housing Group**

Ann is passionate about ensuring tenants have a voice and a real opportunity to make valued contributions to improving service delivery. Ann has always had an innovative approach to tenant engagement and her achievements are even more deserving of praise when it's clear that her tenant participation role is not the whole picture. She also plays a

big part in other aspects of the work including Customer Service Excellence, service reviews and complaint handling. Ann's commitment to TP and empowering tenants has not only been integral to the development of participating tenants but has also had a positive influence with her 'can do' attitude and guidance.

- **Vy Cochran, Wales & West Housing Association**

From her very first day on the job, Vy has been up for a challenge and has gone above and beyond the remit of her part time role. As well as her work at the Association, Vy is also a practising holistic therapist and trained counsellor and has offered her therapy skills free of charge to raise funds for the Alzheimer's Society. Dedicated and professional, Vy's 'can do' attitude affects everyone she comes into contact with and her inspiration is infectious. She has assisted in a vast number of tenants projects and is the key person who brings everyone together to make each one of the projects the huge successes they have been.

- **Mair Edwards, Cymdeithas Tai Clwyd**

Being new to the housing field in 2006, this did not stop Mair embracing her role with her eagerness to find out all there was about housing. Mair has an outstanding ability to communicate with people of all levels and has been so inspirational that staff now realise that it's worth giving up their time to get involved with TP and Community Development activities. Mair has arranged that each department has a TP Champion who promotes TP activities within their departments and has led on a number of Community Development projects including the restructure of the very successful Tenants Day. In the words of one of her tenants, Mair is "humorous, cheerful and this coupled with her kindness and courtesy makes it a pleasure to work alongside her."

IMPROVING THE ENVIRONMENT

- **Solas Cymru**

Residents have been involved in working with Keep Wales Tidy at a local church by reforming the church and its property standards by co-ordinating and participating in regular litter picks, building composters on the grounds, stripping and re-painting doors and assisting with keeping the area free from brambles. Due to the success of the project, the local church Minister would like to roll out the projects across the borough. The project has helped break down the stigma often attached to the people Solas supports and has allowed the community to better understand individuals' complex needs.

- **RCT Homes – 'Estate Environmental Improvement Programme'**

The Tenant Panel has evaluated over 22 community led projects and awarded over £100,000 in grants between 2008 and 2010. The projects have included grass cutting and general gardening and allotment work as well as designing, constructing and erecting community arts, sculpture and banners. These projects have been responsible for training and involving over 250 people in their delivery and have enabled the community to gain skills to deliver work on a commercial basis. The scheme aims to empower tenants in both the funding of projects and in the way in which the allocation of grants is administered.

- **Jubilee Gardens Gardening Club**

The general appearance of the scheme and front gardens was a little uninspiring and the main aim of this gardening project was to encourage residents to take ownership of their local environment whilst improving the general appearance of the estate and reducing

litter. Although obtaining funding was unsuccessful the residents were fortunate to receive donations from their grounds maintenance contractor and a discount from the local Garden Centre. Tenants and children alike took part in the recycling and litter picking sessions, hanging basket workshops, flowerpot painting and the manual work of digging and planting resulting in stunning looking gardens to be proud of.

- **Penrhos Tenants & Residents Association**

The Penrhos TRA have worked tirelessly together on community projects and the transformation to the area has been amazing. Having successfully been awarded with grant funding, the TRA consulted with the local residents and set about planting 11 semi-mature trees. Other projects they have been involved in include: ensured kerbside wheelie bins and recycling garden waste skip were placed on the estate, replacing the fencing around the play area, an allotment site and the multi functional recreation area to name a few. Through their work, the TRA has managed to turn the area into a valuable community asset.

- **Cymdeithas Tai Eryri**

The Association have recently set up Eco-teams with the aim to work with tenants to save energy and reduce waste which in turn will save money. The Eco team have met with the first 4 tenants in the new low carbon homes to help them understand the new technology and have provided them with information on how to reduce their bills. The Association had held surgeries during the Tenant Forum meetings and the outcome of these are that the tenants involved have already seen a reduction in their bills.

- **Foundation Housing – ‘Young People’s Project’**

The aim of the project was to improve the environment by developing a Tenants Garden in the back yard of the property. Tenants worked together with the aim of utilising the area to grow their own food and flowers and improve the space so that it was a place they could meet with friends. As well as using a variety of pots and planting vessels the tenants began to cultivate the limited ground available and as the year progressed, a wide variety of plants and food have grown. The tenants who initiated the project have had the experience of developing their ideas into a project of substance and it has provided an opportunity to develop a sense of community whilst living at the project.

- **Clwyd Alyn Housing Association – ‘Greenbank Villas’**

The inception of the garden project at Greenbank Villas goes back to mid 2007 when service users felt that the garden could be enhanced. That year, the service users cleared the garden and planted some vegetables and over the winter months further plans were made to not only have a vegetable patch but also a nice place to sit as well as hold events/activities. It was decided that the work would not only be done by “experts” but the service users would actively take part. Service users continue to have full involvement in the ongoing planning of activities and they are currently preparing to complete the roof over the decking area and the garden has become a focal point of Greenbank Villas life.

- **Cymdeithas Tai Cantref**

It is one of Cantref’s values to being environmentally friendly wherever possible which is why they introduced the environmental awareness days. This method is successful in getting tenants to meet with staff and take pride in their community and introduce new ways to participate. Litter picks and skip days have been organised as well as arranging for any aluminium waste to be collected for use in school projects. The tenants are

encouraged to recycle wherever possible and some areas have been improved by bulb planting in some areas following the litter picks.

▪ **Riverside Park & Stoneleigh Close Tenants & Residents Association**

The aim of the work was to improve the area for entry into the Flintshire Environmental award for the Best Kept Senior Citizen's Estate Category. The group was successful in being awarded a grant from Keep Wales Tidy to assist with numerous litter picks that the group holds each year. They were also awarded a merit award for the work they did in improving the appearance of the estate with hanging baskets, flower pots and window boxes. Since the work has been done there has been real sense of community ownership and pride from residents of all ages.

▪ **Jean O'Leary**

Jean champions the cause for improving the environment at every opportunity. She promotes recycling and also educates tenants on improving their local environments by organising litter picks and bulb planting. She has arranged trips, assisted in the allotment scheme application and is heavily involved in the local authority's environmental works project scheme. Despite having limited mobility Jean visits properties with a questionnaire for younger people to attract their interest in waste disposal and methods of enhancing their environment.