

The magazine for residents of Wales & West Housing

FREE

# In Touch

WINTER 2018 | ISSUE 96

 LIKE US  
TO WIN  
AN AMAZON  
ECHO DOT

INVESTING  
MILLIONS  
IN OUR HOMES



BRIGHT LIGHTS OF  
BARRACKSFIELD  
AT CHRISTMAS

WIN £60 in shopping vouchers





# Christmas opening hours

As usual our offices are closed from  
Christmas until the New Year

**CLOSED**  
**4PM FRIDAY**  
**21 DECEMBER**  
**TO 8.30AM**  
**WEDNESDAY**  
**2 JANUARY**

In an emergency,  
please call  
our Customer  
Service Centre  
**0800 052 2526**

## Contact Us

Wales & West Housing, Archway House, 77 Parc Tŷ Glas, Llanishen, Cardiff CF14 5DU

Telephone: **0800 052 2526** Text: **07788 310420** Email: [contactus@wwha.co.uk](mailto:contactus@wwha.co.uk)

Website: [www.wwha.co.uk](http://www.wwha.co.uk)

You can also contact members of staff direct by their email. For example, [joe.bloggs@wwha.co.uk](mailto:joe.bloggs@wwha.co.uk)

## Follow us on twitter @wwha



Did you know that you can now get  
more news and updates online?

## Other languages and formats

If you would like a copy of this edition of In  
Touch in Welsh or another language or format,  
for example in large print, please let us know  
and we will help you.

# CONTENTS



21



- 5 Clearing up after Storm Callum, Christmas cheer for Wrexham
- 7 Our neighbourly communities
- 8 Old school makes way for new homes
- 10 A new life for seafront hotel
- 12 Families move into new homes with a sea view
- 15 Your hopes for 2019
- 16 Investing in our homes
- 18 Why music is the best medicine
- 20 Cambria welcomes new apprentices
- 21 Win an Echo Dot
- 22 Savvy Christmas shopping
- 24 How we use your personal data
- 26 Have fun this Christmas... but don't upset your neighbours
- 28 Residents' news round-up
- 30 How to prevent condensation
- 33 Gardening with Glenys
- 36 Prize puzzles
- 38 A day in the life of a Community Development Officer
- 39 Winter what's on



## WELCOME FROM ANNE

Dear residents

The festive season is fast approaching, so once again we turn our attention to Christmas and the New Year as the theme of this issue.

Looking back on the last 12 months, it has been a busy time for us here at Wales & West Housing. Our new website is now live and many residents have been using it to find the information they need and contact us. We have also launched new Facebook and Instagram accounts, so to celebrate our new social media platforms we are giving one resident the chance to win an Echo Dot.

Since the start of the year we have completed 230 new homes and have a further 300 more under way, providing more homes for residents across Wales. You can find out where we are building and meet the residents in Pembrokeshire

and Bridgend, who are looking forward to enjoying Christmas in their new homes.

It's the time of year when many of us may join in a Christmas Carol, but did you know a rousing singalong could be good for your health and wellbeing? You can read all about the residents who have found that music is the best medicine.

There are also ideas and tips on how you can get the best out of the festive season without going into debt and ways to avoid waste.

With two pages of Christmas puzzles, plenty of festive recipes and Christmas crafts, I hope you enjoy reading your seasonal In Touch.

Wishing you all a Merry Christmas and healthy and prosperous New Year.

**Anne Hinchey**  
Chief Executive

If you have any thoughts on In Touch or how we could improve, please let us know. We will continue to listen to you. Simply email [contactus@wwha.co.uk](mailto:contactus@wwha.co.uk) or speak to our PR and Communications Team on 0800 052 2526.

# More ways to connect with us than ever before...

Thousands of you have been visiting the new-look WWH website, with online services for residents already proving popular.

More than 7000 people used the website in the first four weeks after its launch in mid-September.

You can now pay your rent, set up a direct debit, or get a copy of your rent statement by following the 'Pay my rent' option from the homepage.

It's also possible to find out what to do for repairs around your home such as if your heating stops working or you have a water leak.

There are also tips and advice on what to do for non-emergency repairs or how to deal with mould growth in your home.

You can access this help from the contact page of the website.

The contact page is also the place to go to find out who your housing officer is and who to contact if you are having issues with your neighbours.

New WWH Facebook and Instagram accounts were launched at the same time as the new website, adding to our existing presence on Twitter and LinkedIn.

Instagram will be the go-to place to view photos of our new homes, including artist impressions, and we'll be using Facebook to post out the latest news, jobs, community events and more.

**Turn to page 21 for the chance to win an Echo Dot in our social media competition**

## Get social with Wales & West Housing

Here is a list of all our accounts:



**Facebook**  
facebook.com/  
wwhousing



**Twitter**  
@wwha



**LinkedIn**  
linkedin.com/  
company/wwha



**Instagram**  
instagram.com/  
wwhousing

# Rallying round after Storm Callum

Staff in West Wales have been helping residents and the local community in West Wales whose homes were flooded by Storm Callum.

Residents living in WWH homes in Newcastle Emlyn, Llanybydder and Pontweli, Llandysul, were affected when two days of torrential rain and 60mph winds caused the River Teifi to reach its highest level in 30 years. Many communities along its banks were flooded and left without power and several WWH homes in Carmarthenshire were also affected.

In Newcastle Emlyn the community rallied around to support the local residents, with businesses setting up

the Newcastle Emlyn Flood Assistance Facebook Group to donate household items and money to those affected. To support the fundraising we took part in a fundraising event at the local leisure centre, raising money with a lucky dip and face-painting stall.

Our office in Newcastle Emlyn was also the venue for a Flood Action meeting, which brought together local support agencies and county council representatives. Housing Officer Ann Griffiths said: "The community has really come together to help everyone affected. Everyone has been so generous in their support."



## Christmas cheer for Wrexham

A festive display of Santas, reindeers, elves and the colours of Christmas are set to light up Hill Court in Wrexham this year.

Residents are teaming up to create a Christmas spectacular

at WWH's Barracksfield estate in Wrexham, by decorating as many of their houses and outside areas of the court as possible.

The idea was kickstarted by Emma Evans, following an impressive display created last year by her neighbour, Amanda Price, and her partner Richard.

Emma said: "Amanda always puts in so much effort that this year I had the crazy idea that we could light up the whole court. Luckily most of neighbours have indicated they're on board so we're going to try and create a Hill Court Winter Wonderland to bring the community together.

"The plan is to get as many people as possible to put lights

up in their windows and we've asked residents if they have any old decorations to donate so we can use them to make displays.

"We're even hoping to have sleighs, reindeers, a Santa's Grotto a small nativity scene and a train track running around a real tree."

"We want to spread a little happiness this Christmas so hopefully everything will come together."



To see more, visit the Wales & West Housing Facebook page at [facebook.com/wwhousing](https://facebook.com/wwhousing)



*Front row: Neil Ayling, Chief Officer, Social Services, Flintshire County Council, Councillor Christine Jones, resident Eleanor Hardy and Anne Hinchey, Chief Executive of Wales & West Housing, with guests and residents enjoying the celebrations.*

# Happy Birthday!

## Llys Jasmine celebrates its 5<sup>th</sup> birthday

Residents enjoyed cake, a carvery and music from a school choir and Elvis tribute act to mark its 5<sup>th</sup> birthday.

A packed day of celebrations was held in October at the extra care scheme. Since the first residents moved in five years ago, it has become an integral part of the community in Mold.

In keeping with its place at the heart of life in the town, community leaders were invited and there was a performance from Ysgol Bryn Coch school choir to start the day's events.

Anne Hinchey, Chief Executive of Wales & West Housing, commended the positive impact which the extra care facility has had on the wider community.

Anne said: "It's hard to believe Llys Jasmine is already five years

old. Wherever we build new homes we set out to make a difference to people's lives and the local community and nowhere is this more evident than here.

"It is not only a home to our residents, it is a place where family, friends, visitors and community groups are welcomed in equal measure.

"It is a place both we, and the people of Mold, are proud of."

Llys Jasmine accepted its first residents in October 2013 and is now a meeting point for community groups such as Flintshire Disability Forum and Flintshire Sounds. More recently, residents watched a play from Theatr Clwyd which was live streamed on TVs.

Flintshire County Council's Cabinet Member for Social

Services, Councillor Christine Jones, said: "It was a pleasure to be part of the fifth birthday celebrations for Llys Jasmine.

"I can't believe it's been five years since this wonderful facility was opened. It is such a welcoming environment and a wonderful place to be. Well done to everyone who made the day so special and here's to the next five years."

Llys Jasmine was the first scheme of its kind in Wales to feature special apartments for people with dementia and has 61 apartments in total.

The scheme cost £8.3 million to construct and was provided by Wales & West Housing in partnership with Flintshire County Council and Welsh Government.

## Resource centre to mark 5<sup>th</sup> birthday

There's another fifth birthday on the way at WWH as Hightown Community Resource Centre in Wrexham prepares to mark the milestone in February 2019.

The centre has grown into a valuable community resource since its official opening in 2014 as part of our new £15m housing development in the area.

Five years on, more than 20 regular activities take place at the centre each week, ranging from karate to yoga and bingo.

It's also a popular venue for children's parties and used as a meeting place for community groups, with several adaptable spaces available for hire.

New centre manager Annette Bryden said: "The fifth birthday will be a real celebration of the role which the centre plays in the community in Hightown. Some of the groups have been users of the centre since day one while some have only

recently come on board but the centre is busy throughout the day, every day.

"We're very grateful for the support we receive from the Friends of Hightown Community Centre, who meet every two months and help with the running of the centre. If anyone is interested in getting involved with this group, please get in touch."



Rooms at Hightown CRC are available to hire from £8 per hour, including

kitchen use. To make a booking contact Annette on 07969 814 442 or email [annette.bryden@wwha.co.uk](mailto:annette.bryden@wwha.co.uk).

A full timetable of weekly activities at Hightown CRC is available at [facebook.com/hightowncrc](https://facebook.com/hightowncrc)

## Roofing contractors Make a Difference in Merthyr Tydfil



Young people at our Twyncarmel scheme in Merthyr Tydfil have a safe play area thanks to contractors EWIS. The company has been replacing roofs on homes at the scheme and, as part of the contract, donated money to clear an overgrown field and create an area where local children can play. The area was formerly the site of blocks of flats, which were demolished many years ago.

## Shop with a difference



A shop with a difference has opened in the centre of Bridgend.

The Mulligan Community (MC) Hub in Caroline Street run a membership-based community shop where those on low incomes can join for free. As a member they can then buy their first bag of meat, fruit, veg and ready meals for £10, and £5 per bag afterwards.

The food comes from Fareshare, a charity which receives excess food that supermarkets like Asda, Sainsburys and Tesco would normally throw away.

The hub also works with other organisations such as Citizen's Advice and runs free drop-in counselling and advice sessions, plus classes in cooking, nutrition, weight-loss and digital inclusion sessions through the local authority.

To become a member, families or individuals must show proof of benefit or low income, and commit to taking part in one or more of the free sessions.

Laura Allcott, Community Development Officer at WWH, was so impressed by the hub she arranged for one of our local partners, Ian Williams Ltd, to help decorate the new building.

Since opening in July more than 300 people have joined. For more info on the project visit <http://mulligancommunity.org/mc-hub-bridgend.html>

# Old school makes way

Demolition is due to start on the site of a former school in Lampeter to make way for 20 affordable homes.

Ysgol Ffynnonbedr on Bryn Road, Lampeter, has been empty for several years since the school was relocated to a new purpose-built building near the town's secondary school.

Planning permission to demolish the building and build 12 one-bedroom apartments and eight two and three bedroom houses was granted by Welsh Government Planning Inspectors in October.

WWH is working with Hacer Developments Ltd to provide affordable housing for local families and individuals on the site, which was identified for general housing in Ceredigion Council's Local Development Plan.

Carwyn Davies of Hacer Developments said: "We are aiming for the development to go ahead as planned before the end of the year. We'll be working with officers at



## New homes could see energy bills cut by up to 90 per cent

Work is due to start on 14 new state-of-the-art energy efficient homes in Bridgend that aim to generate more energy than they use.

The houses and apartments at Bryn Bragl will use the latest energy efficiency and renewable technologies, and aim to cut residents' energy bills by up to 90 per cent. The homes are the first family homes to be modelled on the Solcer House at Stormy Down, Bridgend. Designed by the Welsh School of Architecture at Cardiff University, it was Wales' first low cost energy positive house to generate more heat and electricity than it used over a year.

Like the Solcer house the new WWH homes will also use the latest energy-saving technologies,

and will generate more electricity than they actually use. The homes will be fitted with the latest innovative technologies including:

- Roofs made from solar panels instead of tiles, which will generate electricity.
- Lithium ion batteries fitted in the loft to store the solar electricity generated for use in the house at night. Any spare energy will be released back into the national grid.
- Pumps which draw heat from the air to provide additional heat for heating and hot water.
- Steel panels on south-facing external walls to generate heat from the sun, which provides extra heat for the hot water and heating.

- Energy-efficient double-glazed windows and doors and thermally insulated walls to conserve heat.

Work on the new homes is scheduled to start early next year, and is due to be finished in 12 months. The scheme will be a mix of one-bedroom apartments and two and four bedroom houses.

WWH is investing £1 million in the project, with a further £2.1 million grant funding from Welsh Government, including £839,000 from Welsh Government's three-year Innovative Housing Programme.

Shayne Hembrow, WWH Deputy Chief Executive, said: "Innovation in energy efficiency and renewable technologies for the home are getting more and

# for new homes



Ceredigion County Council to make sure we meet the planning requirements and make it happen.

“This development will bring jobs to the area as we will be recruiting locally for labourers and craftspeople to work on the scheme. We also like to buy our materials from local suppliers wherever possible to keep the investment in the local economy.”

WWH Development Manager Gareth Thomas, said: “We are pleased to be working with Ceredigion Council and Hacer to provide modern, high-quality homes that local families and individuals on the local housing waiting list desperately need.

“We want to make sure that the development will complement the local area and community and cause minimum disruption. During the construction phase the development will bring investment into the local community.”

more advanced and effective. The additional funding from the Innovative Housing Programme means that the homes we build in Bridgend will have the most modern technology available to us. For the residents who will live in them, the houses will be cheap to run with very low or virtually

zero energy bills, depending on their energy usage.

“We want to be sure that even if the technologies we fit in these houses is ultra-modern, the controls will be simple and easy for residents to use.”

“Being a mix of houses and apartments, the Bryn Bragl development will give us the chance to monitor how different-sized households can use the technologies to reduce both their energy bills and fuel poverty.”

“This is an exciting project

for us and we hope the homes in Bridgend will lead the way for more homes to be built this way.”

Announcing the Innovative Housing Programme projects, Welsh Government Housing and Regeneration Minister Rebecca Evans said: “It is clear that if the scale and pace of house-building is to increase significantly, traditional approaches are unlikely to deliver on their own. Done the right way, we have an opportunity to build high quality, near zero carbon homes, capturing and boosting the skills and expertise within the Welsh construction and manufacturing industries.”



## New life for seafront hotel

The site of a former hotel on Rhyl seafront is set for regeneration as an apartment block of affordable homes provided by Wales & West Housing.

Plans have been approved to build 41 apartments where the Grange Hotel once stood on East Parade in the Denbighshire town. The building was demolished in 2016 and had been derelict until it was bought by WWH. The new development would be a mix of one and two bedroom homes for social rent for the over 55s.

Matthew Hall, WWH Construction Manager, said: "We're proud that this derelict site will be brought back into use as a development of modern,



energy-efficient affordable homes for the over 55s.

"The new apartments will help to increase the supply of much-needed housing in Denbighshire

and provide residents with independent living in a prime location on Rhyl seafront."

Work is scheduled to begin on site in March 2019.

## IN THE PIPELINE

### South Wales

**Bridgend:** Plans are being drawn up to build 10 flats in the seaside town of Porthcawl. The proposed scheme is at Station Close near the town centre.

The development was due to be submitted to Bridgend County Borough Council's planning committee by the end of the year.

**Cardiff:** WWH has bought the site of the former YMCA at Wedal Road in the Roath area of Cardiff. Subject to planning permission, we hope to build apartments on the site next year.

### West Wales

**Ceredigion:** Plans to build an extra care scheme in one of Aberystwyth's prime locations have

been given the go-ahead.

Ceredigion councillors approved Wales & West Housing's proposal to build an extra care scheme on the site of the former Plas Morolwg overlooking the harbour to the south of the town centre.

The scheme will provide 56 independent one and two bedroom apartments, built over three and four storeys, with 24-hour on-site care and support for adults who need it.

### North Wales

**Flintshire:** In Mold WWH has purchased the site of the former Bryn Awel Hotel, off Denbigh Road, with plans to build 23 one and two bedroom apartments.

An application to demolish



## Almost 300 homes are under construction at present and more are due to start very soon

**82** homes started

homes completed **29**

We have almost 300 homes under construction or due to start soon as we increase our development of new affordable homes across Wales.

In the past three months, we have taken ownership of 29 newly-completed homes at St Edeyrn's Village, Cardiff and Court Close, Aberthin, in the Vale of Glamorgan.

We have also started on site building 82 new homes for over 55s at Chiltern Close, Cardiff.

Other sites underway or about to start in the coming weeks are:

- 📍 **Holywell** extra care, Flintshire
- 📍 The old police station, **Prestatyn**, Denbighshire
- 📍 Former retirement scheme at Ystad Goffa, **Flint**, Flintshire
- 📍 Gwynfryn, **Wrexham**
- 📍 Land next to Ikea, Grangetown, **Cardiff**
- 📍 Heol Spencer, Coity, **Bridgend**
- 📍 Gypsy Lane, **Hay on Wye**, Powys
- 📍 Penwallis, **Fishguard**, Pembrokeshire
- 📍 Parrog Yard, **Newport**, Pembrokeshire
- 📍 Feidr Eglwys, **Newport**, Pembrokeshire
- 📍 Ysgol Ffynnonbedr, **Lampeter**, Ceredigion



the existing building has been submitted prior to a full planning application being made.

In Sandycroft, WWH has entered into a deal with JWG Developments Ltd to build eight homes for rent at the site of an old pub.

The new development will bring land at the former New Inn on Station Road, Sandycroft, back into use to address a shortage of affordable housing in the area.

**Powys:** 25 new affordable homes are to be built in partnership with SY Homes Ltd at land off Garth Owen in Newtown. The development, valued at £3m, will be a mix of 16 two bedroom houses, 3 x 4 bed houses and 6 two bedroom apartments.

**Wrexham:** We held a public consultation at the end of September for a planned new development in Gwersyllt. WWH is looking to build 23 affordable new homes on land at Woodlands Farm, north of Dodds Lane in the village.

The development would consist of 10 three bedroom houses, 6 two bedroom houses, 3 bungalows and 4 one bedroom apartments. A full planning application will be submitted before the end of the year with plans to start building on site in 2019.

**Wrexham:** Plans have been submitted for a proposed new development at Jacques Yard

in Wrexham in partnership with Castlemead Group Ltd. If approved, the scheme will be made up of 19 houses and six apartments for rent to address the shortage of affordable housing in Wrexham.



Follow us on Instagram to see more pics of our new developments:

[instagram.com/wwhousing](https://www.instagram.com/wwhousing)

# Families move into new homes with a sea view

The first families have moved into their new homes on our £4 million affordable housing development overlooking Fishguard Bay.

Twelve new homes on Wales & West Housing's development at Parc y Cefn, off Penwallis Road, have been completed ahead of schedule allowing local families waiting on the Pembrokeshire Choice Homes housing register to move in.

The properties are our first new large-scale housing development in Pembrokeshire. Work started on site in January and when completed in February 2019 will provide 30 houses, bungalows and apartments for affordable rent for local families living and working in the popular coastal town.

Among the first residents to move into the homes was Fishguard-born Shannon Ryan and her partner Shane. Shannon and Shane have two sons, aged three and one-month, and were keen to move from their bungalow to a more suitable home.

Shannon, who worked in the town's Co-op supermarket until the birth of her first son, said: "I've always lived in Fishguard. My mother lives near the site and I have watched the houses being built so I'm really pleased that our family can move to Parc y Cefn."

"Our old bungalow had a wet room and shower and was more suitable for someone else. I'm looking forward to having a bathroom for the boys and a bedroom with the fantastic views over the town."



Retired IT engineer and musician Leonard Morse was delighted to move from the Fishguard flat, where he has lived for 13 years, to his new bungalow. Pembrokeshire-born and bred Mr Morse, 65, said: "My new home is amazing. I suffer from depression and the peace and quiet at Parc y Cefn will completely transform my life."

Wales & West Housing (WWH) employed Morgan Construction Wales to build the homes, which have been part funded by the Welsh Government in partnership with Pembrokeshire County Council. They are part of WWH's ongoing investment in quality, affordable homes in the county.

Fishguard councillor

Pat Davies, Pembrokeshire County Council's Cabinet Member for Housing and Regulatory Services, said: "Wales & West Housing has done a great job of sensitively developing the Parc y Cefn site. The homes are well-designed and I'm delighted that the first phase is complete."

"Several young families in Fishguard have called me saying how pleased they are to have been allocated homes at Parc y Cefn."



# I want a home



Shannon Ryan with partner Shane

We are increasing the number of homes we let right first time. To do this means having the right conversations with new residents so we are confident that the homes we offer is what they want.

Many of you tell us that location is important, especially for new residents and, occasionally, the way in which the local housing waiting lists are designed can make finding the right person for the right property more difficult. We are continually working with our local authority partners to address these issues. In Carmarthen, Ceredigion, Flintshire and Powys we are currently working with the local authorities to help them review and reshape their waiting lists, using comments and feedback from you. If we do this the right way we can make sure the waiting list system works for everyone.

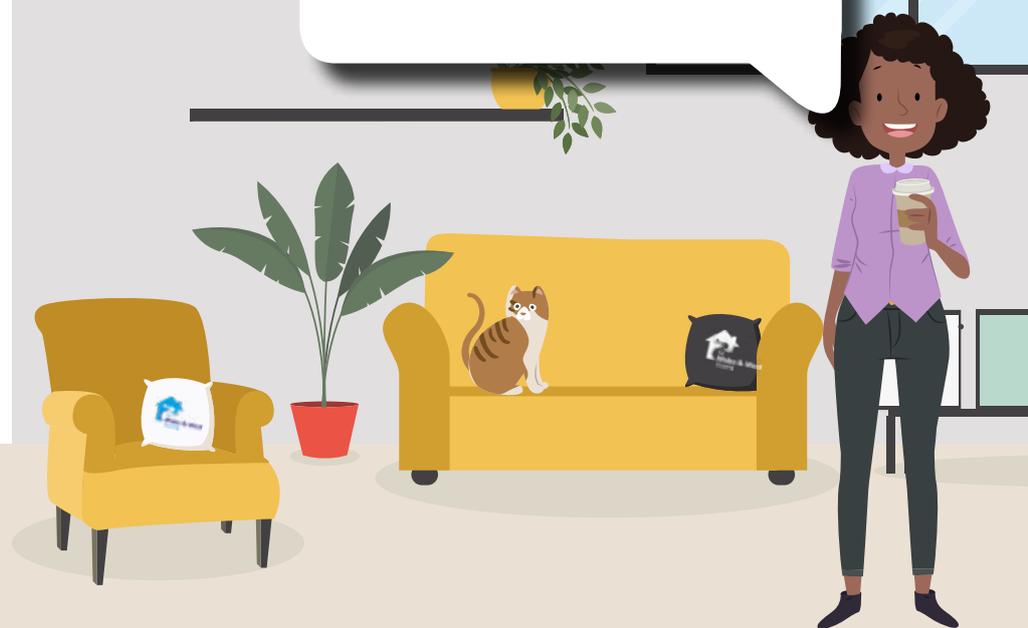
**53%**

of available **homes were right first time** for residents  
*up 2% from last year*

**254**

residents **had keys to their new home** this quarter  
*13 more than last year*

I love living in my flat with Wales & West Housing, it's cosy, warm, comfy and staff are great!



## *“Our new home will make such a difference to our family”*

For Sarah James and her partner Will Kinsey moving to their new home will make a “massive difference” to their family.

The couple’s youngest child Kyrion, five, was born with spina bifida and is unable to use his legs so Sarah and Will have to carry him up and down the stairs around their three-storey home at Clos Maes Gwyn, Bridgend.

At their new home at Parc Y Fferm, Coity, Bridgend, Kyrion now has his own ground floor bedroom, and ensuite bathroom that have been specially-adapted to meet his needs as he grows.

WWH worked with the family’s occupational therapists to design the ground floor of the four bedroom house at Parc Y Fferm to meet Kyrion’s needs. Hoists have been fitted in the lounge and Kyrion’s ground floor bedroom.

The wet room has been

designed with low-level toilet and washing facilities and a low-level shower that Kyrion will be able to use independently as he gets older. The doorways and hallways on the ground floor are extra wide to accommodate Kyrion’s wheelchair.

Will, who works as a mechanic, said: “We love our new home, it’s better than we ever could have expected and will make a massive difference to our family.”

“Although Kyrion is five, he is smaller than a two-year-old. In our old house, there were two flights of stairs between his bedroom and the kitchen and lounge, so we had to carry him around. Now we can all live on one level and Kyrion can move around independently.

“The garden is big and safe and will make such a difference to our other two children as well as

Kyrion.”

“It was definitely worth the wait. As Kyrion gets older and his needs change, we can make this our forever home.”

“We are really looking forward to Christmas in our new home and all our family being together.”

Residents moved into the new development on the site of Parc Farm, Coity at the end of October. Built by Morganstone, the scheme is a mix of one and two bedroom flats and houses and two specially adapted houses.

Housing Officer Ilka Beynon (pictured below with Will) said: “The family had been living in their previous home for four years and we had looked at ways of adapting it for Kyrion but there wasn’t the scope to do what they needed. It’s fantastic to see the difference the adapted home will have on the whole family.”



# Our Neighbourly Communities

In the last edition of In Touch we told you about a scheme bringing major supermarkets and community projects together to share surplus goods.

The scheme is now providing residents at some of our schemes with their own "little shops."

Residents at St Clements Court in Cardiff have joined the Neighbourly scheme and receive surplus bakery, fruit and veg, and non-perishable goods twice weekly from their local Lidl store. "Our little "shop" is really bringing people together," said Neighbourly volunteer and resident Christine Foulkes.

"Residents come to the communal lounge and take what they need and give a donation if they can afford it - most people

give something. Visitors and staff have goods and give donations too. The money we collect goes towards our community activities.

"Occasionally we get garden plants that are a little worse for wear but our resident gardeners usually manage to revive them."

Ten residents' groups from Bridgend, Cardiff, Powys, Rhondda Cynon Taff and the Vale of Glamorgan are currently signed up to the Neighbourly scheme.



If you're interested in joining, and have volunteers to collect the food and have a food safety certificate, contact Claire Hammond, Resident Participation Strategy Officer, on [claire.hammond@wwha.co.uk](mailto:claire.hammond@wwha.co.uk) or call 029 2041 4057 or 07766 832 692.

## What will the New Year bring?



*"As a keen gardener, I hope 2019 will bring another long, warm summer with hot, sunny days and plenty of rain at night! Next year our community gardeners are hoping to grow monkey nuts for the first time, so we'll need plenty of sun to succeed. On a personal note, I hope to remain healthy so I can continue to enjoy gardening."*

### **Glenys Vandervolk**

is a leading volunteer at the St Mellons Community Garden in Cardiff.

*"I started recycling when I was a young mum years ago and to this day I'll always try to make something out of unwanted items rather than see them thrown away.*

*For example, I make a lot of patchwork quilts and cushion covers out of material which people pass on to me and I pass back to the church. So even at a simple level there is a lot we can do, it's just about creating more awareness of how much we can*



Irene Winn

*actually recycle which will make a difference."*

### **Irene Winn**

who lives at St Mary's Court in Chirk

*"I'm studying sport at Merthyr College, so next year I hope to finish my course. I have volunteered at the local football club, but I would really like to work with disabled children and get them more involved in sport."*

### **Kerys Roberts**

is 17 and lives at Twyncarmel, Merthyr Tydfil

# Investing mi££ions to modernise our homes this year

WWH has spent just over £16.5m on maintaining our homes so far this year to ensure they're among the best quality and warmest in Wales.

While we continue to do all we can to build more homes, it's vital that we invest in our existing homes to keep them in excellent condition.

A large proportion of our maintenance programme is spent on scheduled works, replacing

kitchens and bathrooms which are nearing the end of their life.

"We're committed to investing £35m over the next three years to make our homes warmer and cheaper to run," said WWH's Operations Director, Steve Porter. "We currently invest almost half of every £1 we receive in rent back into modernising our existing homes.

"Every WWH home in Wales will have a new kitchen and

bathroom periodically in order to improve the way our residents live.

"Boilers are upgraded if it becomes uneconomical to repair them or the parts are no longer available for the model in question."

Up to the end of September 2018, more than £2m had been spent on new kitchens and bathrooms and 350 properties had received heating upgrades



at a cost of around £1.5m. In 60 homes in rural areas where they have no gas supply we have fitted innovative air source heating technology.

A major refurbishment of windows at Christchurch Court in Llandrindod Wells and new doors, windows and roofline works at Parc Y Felin in Lampeter are among upgrades completed by WWH this year.

We've also invested in new kitchens for residents at Tongwynlais in Cardiff and Dolau

Bran in Llandoverly, Carmarthen while residents at Sylvester Court, Wrexham and Cwrt Y Castell in Builth Wells have had replacement bathrooms fitted recently too.

Just over 35% of our annual spend goes on repairs – which so far has amounted to 30,000 repairs, 70% of which have been fixed on first visit.

Steve said: "We recognise the inconvenience it causes when there is a fault in your

property and we're committed to completing repairs promptly.

"We're completing repairs within seven days on average and in the most recent resident satisfaction survey you scored us at more than 9 out of 10 for the efficiency and quality of the repairs we're carrying out."

"By completing repairs efficiently using components which last we're able to provide best value for money for all of our residents."

## ***"My new kitchen has made such a difference"***

Wrexham resident Sian Hope says her new kitchen is "life changing."

Sian has mobility problems which meant she wasn't getting full use of her kitchen at Langford Close, Rhosnesni, her home for nearly seven years.

So when she was contacted by WWH as one of the latest residents who was due for a new kitchen, Sian explained the issues she was having and now has a new one adapted to her needs.

Gone are low level shelves and units which were effectively redundant as Sian couldn't bend down to reach them; in have come a new set of cupboards, surfaces and a breakfast bar which are easy for Sian to access.

"I'm very very happy with it," said Sian. "The most pleasing thing was that WWH were happy to design a kitchen which met my needs.

"It's fantastic, and the

team from Cambria who installed it were very professional and efficient.

"The new kitchen has made such a difference day-to-day. Every cupboard in the kitchen is being used now that I can reach them, which is wonderful. The breakfast bar has been an added bonus."



***"It's fantastic"***



# Why music is the best medicine

## Singing can improve your health as well as

If you're planning on joining a Carol singing group this Christmas, the chances are it will do more than just put you in the festive spirit.

Medical experts and researchers have found that group singing not only helps create social bonds: it also acts as an excellent icebreaker to make new friends. That's particularly useful in areas where more and more people, young and old, are suffering from isolation with many of their social interactions conducted remotely via Facebook and Twitter.

Wales has a proud heritage of choirs and across the UK it's now estimated that nearly three million people are now members of a choir or communal singing group, thanks to the rise in popularity of TV choirmaster Gareth Malone and choirs such as Rock Choir, Popchoir and the Military Wives.

Some health authorities such as the Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board in north Wales are also using group singing as therapy for patients who have lung diseases, asthma, bronchiectasis and pulmonary fibrosis.

The British Lung Foundation says that singing can improve your wellbeing as it helps your breathing.



The charity, which promotes singing for lung sessions, also lists these benefits:

### Positive feelings

People say singing is uplifting and joyful. They feel positive during the singing session, and the positive mood continues afterwards. Singing can help if you feel depressed, stressed or anxious.

### Confidence building

People living with a long-term lung condition say that group singing makes them think of themselves as choir members,

rather than patients. Singing and being part of a group gives you confidence and a sense of achievement. It can motivate you to try other activities.

### Feeling part of a group

Regular group singing can make you feel less isolated and is a way of feeling part of a group. You can make new friends. It's also a chance for you to share your own experiences and help others.

### New skills

Joining a singing group is a way of learning new skills and maybe reviving existing ones. Learning new songs can help to

“ *It’s not just about the singing, it brings people of all ages and abilities together* ”  
making you feel happy



improve your ability to focus and concentrate and also to stimulate your memory.

Residents at Christchurch Court retirement scheme in Llandrindod Wells know how effective communal singing can be.

Twice a month volunteers from PAVO Mind, which is part of PAVO (Powys Association of Voluntary Organisations) get residents singing.

Resident Miss Vivien Evans says “We look forward to the singing sessions, they are wonderful and joyous. The songs range from the good old days to the more

modern musicals which suits our varied age group. Singing is a wonderful way to lift spirits regardless of whether we sing in tune or not.”

In Cardigan, Ceredigion, a group of six residents from the Llys Owen retirement scheme take part in weekly Come and Sing sessions which started at the nearby Theatr Mwldan. They have gone on to form their own group and have set up a Come & Sing Cardigan group on Facebook, where the oldest member is 94.

Resident Kate Owen, who is the group’s membership secretary, said: “I had not sung in a group since I was in school, but joining Come and Sing has been great.

“Every week our group visits a local care home where we sing for the residents and they join in as we sing old-time songs and songs from the musicals.

“It’s not just about the singing, it brings people of all ages and abilities together and gets them out of their homes and involved. Everyone enjoys being part of the group.”

To find if there is a choir in your area you could try:

**Rock Choir**

<http://www.rockchoir.com/>

**British Lung Foundation Singing for Health Groups**

<https://www.blf.org.uk/support-for-you/singing-for-lung-health/join-a-group>

**Tenovus Sing with Us** choirs for people affected by cancer

<https://tenovuscancercare.org.uk/how-we-can-help-you/sing-with-us/>

If you would like to start something at your scheme you can contact your WWH Community Development Officer

- Cardiff, Caerphilly and Vale of Glamorgan - **Herman Valentin** [herman.valentin@wwha.co.uk](mailto:herman.valentin@wwha.co.uk)
- Bridgend and Rhondda Cynon Taf - **Laura Allcott** [laura.allcott@wwha.co.uk](mailto:laura.allcott@wwha.co.uk)
- Merthyr/Powys - **Alison Chaplin** [alison.chaplin@wwha.co.uk](mailto:alison.chaplin@wwha.co.uk)
- West Wales - **Rhiannon Ling** [rhiannon.ling@wwha.co.uk](mailto:rhiannon.ling@wwha.co.uk)
- North Wales – **Elizabeth Speare** [elizabeth.speare@wwha.co.uk](mailto:elizabeth.speare@wwha.co.uk)



*Christchurch Court singing group*

# A dream becomes a reality for Rachel

Young mum Rachel Driscoll is getting the chance to follow her career dreams thanks to support from Wales & West Housing.

Rachel applied to study for a diploma in childcare at Aberystwyth college when she left school. However, a change in circumstance meant she was unable to follow her ambitions. Now, at the age of 35, Rachel who lives with her five children at Bro Meiros, Meiros Lane, Drefach Felindre has decided to follow her original dreams.

She has started a Level 3 Diploma in Children's Care Learning and Development with 'Cam wrth Gam' through the medium of Welsh and has a placement at the village nursery, which her young son attends.

WWH Community Development Officer, Rhiannon Ling, advised her to apply to the Government-funded PACE (Parents Childcare and Employment) scheme, which has helped fund childcare while she is in college. We were also able to help with practical support to help with her course work.

Rachel says: "After ill health I decided that I now needed to do what makes me happy, so I was thrilled when I got accepted onto the course, but there were no grants available.

"I've had amazing support



*"Having a second chance in life to do what I originally wanted after leaving school means the world to me."*

from Wales & West Housing who have helped me out so that I am able to get all my course work done.

"The help and advice I've had from WWH has really made it all so much easier and stress free for me.

"Working with young children is my passion, but also spending time and being with my own family during evenings, weekends and all school holidays is also my passion.

"Having a second chance in life to do what I originally wanted after leaving school means the world to me."



# Cambria welcomes new apprentices

Eight new apprentices have joined Cambria Maintenance Services' apprenticeship scheme, bringing the total number to 16.

They will join our skilled maintenance teams, gaining practical training on the job while attending college one day a week to earn industry recognised qualifications.

James, Jake, Nathan and Sion will be working from Cambria's Ewloe office in North Wales, while Andrew, Iestyn, Thomas and William will be working from Cambria's Cardiff office.

During their apprenticeships, experienced Cambria staff will mentor them.

Peter Jackson, Head of Cambria, said "Being able to offer apprenticeships is part of making a difference. It's a great opportunity for the apprentices



to work hands on and attend college to realise their goal of becoming qualified in their chosen field."

"The experienced staff who have stepped forward to be mentors to the new apprentices shows a real commitment to

help safeguard and develop the industry's future workforce.

"When we started Cambria in 2011 we had just one apprentice. Now, seven years on, we are supporting 16 and have further plans to continue investment in our apprenticeship scheme."

## Like us ... and you could win an Echo Dot

As you've already heard, there are now more ways to connect with Wales & West Housing online than ever before.

The recently-launched WWH Facebook and Instagram accounts add to our existing online presence on Twitter @wwha, and LinkedIn.

Follow us on [facebook.com/wwhousing](https://www.facebook.com/wwhousing) where we'll be posting out the latest news, jobs, community events and more.

To mark the launch of our social media platforms, we're offering one of you the chance to win an

Echo Dot device. The Amazon Echo is revolutionising the way we do things around the house from playing music, reading news headlines, to setting up reminders, answering all sorts of questions and controlling your SMART home devices.

To be in with a chance of winning this great prize visit our Facebook page [facebook.com/wwhousing](https://www.facebook.com/wwhousing) and like and follow us.

That's all you need to do and on January 3 2019, we'll select one of our new followers at random who will win the Echo Dot prize.



The winner will be announced on Facebook and in our Spring edition of In Touch.



*Please note: to use this device you will need internet access and a smartphone or tablet.*

# Don't go into debt for Christmas

It's the time of year when spending can get out of control buying expensive presents and excessive food and drink. Here are some tips to avoid running into debt for just one day.

## 1. Be like Santa and make a list

Write a list of all the people you need to buy for and what presents you want to get and stick to it. It will help you avoid any last-minute panic buying or spending more than you can afford.

## 2. Have a pre-Christmas clear-up

Spend a few hours clearing out anything you no longer need, like clothes, books, jewellery, furniture, music, or sporting equipment. You could sell these items online, or at a car boot sale.

## 3. Don't overbuy food

While Christmas may be the time of excess, there is such a thing as buying too much Christmas food. The charity 'Love Food Hate Waste' raises awareness of food waste and has plenty of tips and advice on their website for portion control and ideas for using leftovers. For more ideas visit [www.lovefoodhatewaste.com](http://www.lovefoodhatewaste.com)

## 4. Use voucher codes

Signing up to voucher code sites or scouring the web before buying gifts is a good idea. [Vouchercodes.co.uk](http://Vouchercodes.co.uk) is great for discounts on big brands and eating out and sometimes has exclusive deals.

## 5. Avoid payday loans

If you do have to borrow money, it goes without saying that you should avoid payday loan companies who charge excessive interest rates. A 0% interest credit card is preferable, but you MUST pay back the minimum amount each month. You could try taking a loan from your bank or credit card, which can offer an option to pay back a set amount each month. Credit Unions will also loan to members who have savings with them. To find out if there's a Credit Union in your area visit [www.creditunionsofwales.co.uk](http://www.creditunionsofwales.co.uk)

## 6. Use your loyalty cards

If you have a loyalty card (Boots Advantage/Tesco Clubcard/Sainsbury's Nectar), and never claim the points, cash them in or convert them to vouchers to spend at a specific store as they often give you more. (However

it only works if you intended to shop at that store. As with everything shop around to make sure you're getting the best deal even with your vouchers.)

## 7. Keep a running total

Keep a check on your spending – maybe compile a running total on your mobile phone or tablet. You'll be better placed to manage your bills if you know what the bottom line of your spend amounts to on each card.

## 8. Try an IOU

To take advantage of savings in the January sales, you could always present your loved one with a personalised IOU certificate which you can print from the MoneySavingExpert website [www.moneysavingexpert.com/shopping/christmas-iou-certificate](http://www.moneysavingexpert.com/shopping/christmas-iou-certificate)

## 9. Plan for next Christmas

Once Christmas is over, start planning ahead for next year! To make sure you are set up for next Christmas, try opening a regular savings account. Shop for presents throughout the year, especially during sales or pre-plan larger gifts so you can pay them off over time.

## More residents paying rent by Direct Debit

5178

July 5178 residents

5189

August 5189 residents

5217

September 5217 residents



### Did you know?

You can request to set up a Direct Debit on our new website.  
[www.wwha.co.uk](http://www.wwha.co.uk)

**With all the financial demands of Christmas, setting up a Direct Debit to pay your rent will give you peace of mind. Over 5,000 residents now pay this way, knowing that their rent will be paid on time and for the correct amount.**

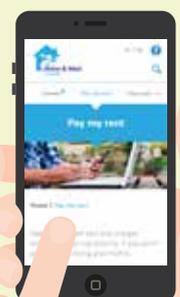
With the launch of our new website we have introduced features to help you pay your rent, including setting up a Direct Debit and making a card payment online. Visit [www.wwha.co.uk/pay](http://www.wwha.co.uk/pay)

### We accept payments online

96  
Payments

23K  
Pounds

since our  
website  
went live in  
September



## Satisfaction and Complaints

### RESOLVING COMPLAINTS

11

On average, it took 11 working days to resolve a complaint, which is a reduction on the average of 19 working days reported in Q2 2018.

### SATISFACTION

8.4

Across our services we scored 8.4 out of 10 for satisfaction. This includes lettings, repairs, new homes and anti-social behaviour.

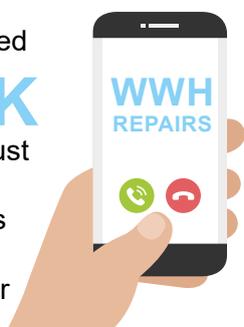
### COMPLAINTS

5

We received a total of 5 complaints in the last three months – 2 less than the previous quarter. We had no complaints in relation to anti-social behaviour or rent this quarter. We had two complaints about our repair service and one about lettings.

## Our quietest call times are usually after lunch

We received **14K** calls just about repairs last quarter



**99%** of calls received about repairs were answered



**9am**

is our busiest call time

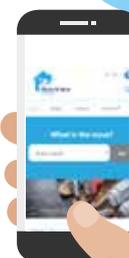


Morning

Hello

How can I help?

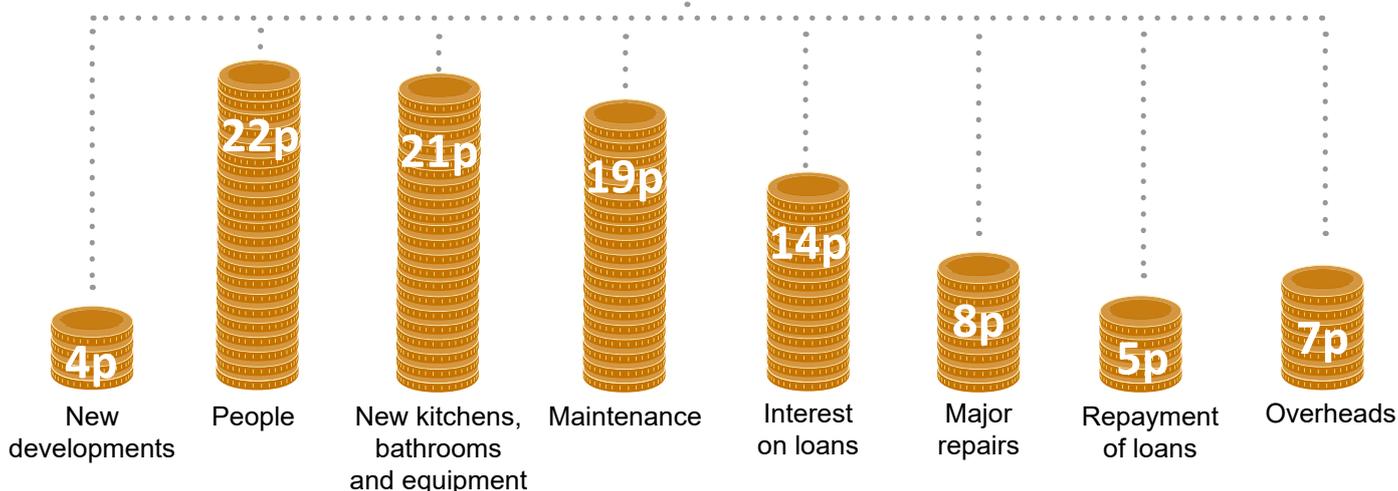
Did you know you can get repair advice and report a repair on our website?



[www.wwha.co.uk/repair](http://www.wwha.co.uk/repair)

## POUND TO PENNIES

Where every  rent is spent





# LET'S GET PERSONAL

## What the new GDPR rules mean for you and Wales & West Housing handles your personal

Unless you've been hiding under a rock for the last six months, you've probably heard about GDPR (the General Data Protection Regulation).

The Regulation, which came into force on May 25<sup>th</sup> 2018, is one of the biggest shake-ups in the laws affecting data privacy of the last 20 years. All companies or organisations that process the data of any EU citizens is affected by these new laws and Wales & West Housing is no exception. We take your privacy very seriously.

This guide will help you to understand what personal data WWH collects from our residents and how we protect it.

### ★ Why do we need your personal information?

We need your personal information to help us manage your tenancy, from applications for WWH homes to reports of anti-social behaviour, insurance claims, complaints and appeals. Without this information, we wouldn't be able to provide you

with a home.

### ★ What personal information do we hold and where do we get it from?

Most of the personal information we handle are details that you have given us about you and the people who live with you. This includes things like your name, address, telephone numbers, date of birth, national insurance number, gender, bank account

# how information

details and criminal convictions or allegations (in anti-social behaviour cases).

In some instances, we also hold special categories of personal information such as race, ethnic origin, religion and information concerning your health or sexual orientation. In such cases:

- you have given us your consent;
- we need the information to protect your interests; and

- there are laws that allow us, or require us, to do so.

Sometimes, we are given personal information by other organisations such as the local authority or the Police, if either you've given them permission or the law says that they can.

Some examples are:

- a housing application
- benefit claim
- support package
- something like anti-social behaviour

## ★ Who do we share your information with?

Sometimes, we share your personal information with other people or organisations.

This can include contractors working for us; the local authority, or the Department for Work and Pensions, to allow them to process any claim for benefits you might make, or provide a service to you; or the Police and other agencies for the purposes of crime prevention or detection. We only do this if you consent for us to do so, or where there are laws that allow us to do so for us to manage your tenancy.

## ★ Do we transfer your personal information outside the European Economic Area (EEA)?

Much of the personal information that we process at Wales & West Housing is held electronically, and most of this is held in our offices. Some of our computer systems store information off-site though and, when they do, we work closely with the software providers to make

sure that the information is stored in accordance with the requirements of the Data Protection Act 2018.

## ★ How long do we hold information for?

We mostly only hold your information for a certain period after your tenancy has ended unless we are required to retain it longer. This will only be done where we have a legal right.

## ★ What rights do you have?

Under the Data Protection Act 2018, you have the right to access the personal information that we process about you. If you believe that the personal information is incorrect or incomplete, you can ask to have it corrected or deleted.

In some circumstances you can block the processing of your data and have the right to object to some types of processing.

For further information, contact us at:

Email: [CorporateInformationManager@wwha.co.uk](mailto:CorporateInformationManager@wwha.co.uk)

Wales & West Housing,  
Archway House, Parc Ty Glas,  
Llanishen, Cardiff, CF14 5DU.

Tel: 0800 052 2526

*If you have any complaints about the way your personal data is used, you can contact the Information Commissioner's Office for the UK at: <https://ico.org.uk>*

# Have fun this Christmas but don't upset your neighbours

It's the season to be jolly, but not everyone is a party animal over Christmas and the New Year.

What may seem like harmless fun to you and your family, could cause noise pollution and anxiety or stress to your neighbours. So, if you're planning on partying, the Welsh Government has this sound advice on how to keep the peace with your neighbours

**Planning a party**, your neighbours are likely to be much more understanding if you warn them in advance – you might even consider inviting them.

Either way, don't ruin their evening, and encourage your guests to be equally respectful.

If possible, keep your television

and music speakers well away from your neighbours' walls and raise them from the floor. If you are playing music alone, think about the volume and consider using headphones.

**Know your neighbours** and try to be considerate of neighbours who work night shifts and have to sleep at unusual times of the day.

If your neighbours are elderly or in poor health or have newborn babies, you may make a big difference to them by being a little quieter.

**What to do if you have a problem with noise?**

Don't suffer in silence. You should always consider, in the

first instance, talking politely to your neighbour and raising the issue directly with them as often people are unaware that they are causing a problem and may be happy to reduce the noise.

However, you should approach your neighbour carefully if you think they might react negatively. If you don't feel that you can talk directly with them, you might consider putting a polite note through the door or even a letter in the post, just to make them aware of the problem. That way you can remain anonymous whilst still bringing the problem to their attention.

Wherever possible we try and get people with complaints talking to get the views of both



# Less cases opened this quarter than the last

sides and try to help to come to an agreement. This is increasingly popular, and our Neighbourhood Dispute Officers can help.

Contact us for further advice on 0800 052 2526 or visit [www.wwha.co.uk](http://www.wwha.co.uk).

Residents involved in ongoing anti-social behaviour cases tell us that being kept informed and up to date on any ongoing work is very important to them.

We will continue to use this information and feedback to learn, and to continually improve our service to our residents.

## How do I complain?

You should only complain to your local authority or turn to legal action when all other approaches have failed.

If you do want to make a formal complaint, you should contact your local authority, usually the environmental health section.

The local authority may send an environmental health officer to visit your home and determine whether a statutory nuisance exists. If the noise is intermittent, they may ask you to keep a diary of the dates and times of the noise and/or call again to try to witness it.

Most local authorities provide information about how they deal with noise nuisance and other types of statutory nuisance complaints in their area on their websites, in the Environmental Health section.

For more advice on noise nuisance and how to complain download the Sound Advice booklet from <https://gov.wales/topics/environmentcountryside/epq/noiseandnuisance/?lang=en>



We opened **30 less anti-social behaviour cases** in the last quarter (78 quarter before)

**Support & Advice** received from Wales & West Housing was good



**Keeping me informed** of the situation could have been better



## Domestic abuse

was the biggest issue last quarter, followed by noise and harassment issues.

## ABERYSTWYTH

## Poppy seller Agnes is proud to be 100



After decades of helping others, Aberystwyth resident Agnes Prosser was the centre of attention recently.

Agnes, who has lived in Gerddi'r Ffynnon, Aberystwyth since it first opened in 1991, celebrated her 100th birthday with her friends and family.

For 30 years Agnes sold poppies for the Royal British Legion and was chair of the ladies section for more than 10 years. Her late husband Verdun was also an active member and, following his death, she continued to support the charity.

Although she has had to give up her poppy selling this year due to mobility issues, Agnes has continued to support the Legion and was thrilled



to receive a birthday card from its patron HM The Queen as well as a certificate from the RBL.

"My party was the best day of my 100 years," said Agnes, who takes charge of the money on bingo nights at Gerddi'r Ffynnon.

## CARDIGAN

Residents at Llys Owen independent living scheme in Cardigan recently enjoyed a fundraising fun quiz night.

Pupils from Ysgol Y Preseli, Ceris Walters, Eve Mathias and Seren Phillips, arranged the event in aid of Children in Need. Residents, friends and family had a great night and raised £361.80 for this worthwhile cause.



Meanwhile, residents at Golwg y Castell, also in Cardigan, took advantage of free health checks and microchips for their pets in an event held in partnership with the Dogs Trust.



## MERTHYR TYDFIL

Residents at Tŷ Pontrhun enjoyed an exclusive performance of Alice in Wonderland in their lounge.

Children from the nearby Troedyrhiw Primary School performed some of the songs from their school production for residents.

## COFFEE AND CASH ACROSS WALES

The annual MacMillan coffee morning brought residents together at our schemes across Wales to raise money for the cancer charity.

In Cardiff, residents at St Catherine's Court came together to bake and raised a fantastic £126.



At Sydney Hall Court in Connah's Quay, Flintshire, resident Kath Oldfield brought friends, neighbours, staff and the local community together for an event which raised £1020, beating the previous year's total of £801.

Most of the money was raised in a community raffle, which Kath organised.



## CARDIFF

The clocks were turned back to the 1940s when volunteers from the Cardiff Story Museum visited residents at Western Court, Cardiff.

The volunteers brought along an array of items from the wartime decade and residents shared their own photos and memories of their life and families.

Resident Peter Wharton played his big band music from the era as everyone reminisced about their dancing days.

At Norbury Court in Fairwater the museum volunteers held a similar afternoon remembering the 1950s.

Scheme manager Ann White said: "Everyone enjoyed their afternoon. They talked about how they were hard times but they had fun."



## NEWTOWN

Residents at Llys Glan Yr Afon in Newtown took a step back in time when they visited this year's Llandrindod Victorian Festival.

Five residents from the extra care scheme enjoyed a day out at the annual event in mid Wales, now in its 37th year.

Highlights of the visit were a look around stalls and displays showcasing military memorabilia, including a Green Goddess, a Punch and Judy show and lunch.

Wellbeing Officer, Ezma Zhao, who organised the trip, said: "Everyone had a great time. The day was filled with smiles and laughter from being out all day and around colour, music and fresh air."



Young families at one of our new schemes in Cardiff enjoyed their first Halloween together with a community event.

The families at Ffordd Williamson, St Edeyrn's, Cardiff, joined in spooky activities with their neighbours and staff from WWH. Residents provided sandwiches and WWH

staff organised activities such as pumpkin-carving and face painting.

Community Development Officer, Sarah Willcox said: "It was a great success. It was lovely to see the community come together and get to know their neighbours."

# How to control condensation

Condensation is one of the biggest causes of mould and damp problems in the home. Condensation forms when the air indoors can't hold any more moisture.

An average family will create over 100 pints of moisture a week through normal household chores such as cooking, washing, ironing, using the tumble

drier, bathing and even breathing!

This can lead to a build-up of condensation with droplets forming on indoor surfaces such as mirrors, windowsills and on walls, particularly when they're cold.

You can help prevent the problem by following a few simple steps:

**1** Put lids on saucepans, dry your washing outside and avoid using paraffin or bottled gas heaters.

**2** Open the bedroom window for 15 minutes each morning.

**3** Make sure your home is well insulated.

**4** Try heating your home a little more, if possible.

**5** Ventilate rooms regularly and leave doors open to allow air to circulate, unless you're cooking or showering.

**6** If you're cooking, showering or bathing – opening the window, putting the fan on and closing the door of the room you're in, will help.

**7** Avoid drying clothes directly on radiators. If you need to dry clothes indoors use an airer, but make sure you don't leave it near a fire which could cause a fire hazard.

**8** If your windows have trickle vents fitted, open and close them, when needed, to allow fresh air to circulate.

# Wrap up your home for winter

Winter can be a magical time of year, but freezing temperatures can cause problems.

Outdoor pipes and taps, or those in cold places like lofts or garage, can freeze and burst – leaving you without water and heating or flooding your home.

Dŵr Cymru is encouraging residents to get their homes winter ready by wrapping external pipes to stop them cracking in the freeze.

There are simple things you can do to prepare your home for winter:

## 1. Wrap up your pipes and taps

If you have pipes and taps outdoors, or in a cold place like a loft or garage, wrap them with insulation or a lagging kit.

## 2. Outdoor taps

Don't leave a hose attached to outside taps. If you have an outside tap, turn off the valve and drain down the tap and pipes to stop them being damaged and cold creeping up the pipe into your house.

## 3. Fix those drips

Dripping taps can increase the risk of frozen pipes. Make sure you report any drips to the repairs team. You can also report them on our website. [www.wwha.co.uk](http://www.wwha.co.uk)

## 4. Check your stop tap

Know where your stop tap is, and check that it works. You'll need to get to it quickly, and know how to turn it off, should the worst happen.

## 5. Got a water meter?

If your meter is fitted to an outside wall, check that the pipes leading to and from it are insulated, with no gaps between them, that the meter cupboard is packed with insulation material, and the door is firmly shut.

## 6. Keep your home cosy

Keep your home warm by using draft excluders and closing curtains at night.

## 7. Don't forget your family, friends and neighbours

Help them out if they need a hand preparing – and perhaps agree to watch each other's houses if you're going to be away.



You can watch Dŵr Cymru's Wrap Up for Winter video on their Youtube channel at [www.youtube.com/channel/UC0GF1wtP7\\_r3ZghQIRu3Q](http://www.youtube.com/channel/UC0GF1wtP7_r3ZghQIRu3Q)

# You can report a repair online

Our busiest call times for repairs are between 9am-12pm, so when possible call us in the afternoon or seek advice in the repairs section of our new website: [www.wwha.co.uk/repair](http://www.wwha.co.uk/repair)

We continue to look at the products and materials we keep on our van to make sure we give ourselves the best opportunity to fix the repair on our first visit. We are happy that 71% of our repairs are being fixed first time (an increase from last quarter).



**7757**  
Repairs  
completed



**71%**  
were fixed  
first time



**60%**  
completed in  
under 5 days

You said

Care was taken to clean up after work was completed



You said

I wish repairs could be done quicker



## Hitting the right note with choir sponsorship



Rhymney Silurian Male Choir recently performed at the Houses of Parliament in London, thanks to sponsorship from Wales & West Housing.

The choir, which dates back to 1951, were invited to perform by their new President, the MP for Merthyr Tydfil and Rhymney, Gerald Jones.

However, before they could take up the honour, they needed to raise more than £600 and that's where WWH stepped in with a £200 donation.

Many MPs turned up to listen to the Choir's performance. Bernard Jenkins, Secretary of Rhymney Silurian Male Choir, said: "It was a wonderful experience and a huge privilege to be able to sing in Parliament. We'd like to thank Wales and West Housing, for the donation which helped to make our trip possible."

As part of our commitment to make a difference to the communities where our residents live WWH has also sponsored the following community projects and groups:

- Ceredigion Young Farmers Club received £2,000 towards the cost of organising its annual Open Farm Day event at Llanerchaeron in September. The event was attended by hundreds of local school children and the general public, who learnt about the rural and agricultural lifestyle.
- We donated £200 to Lampeter Round Table towards the cost of staging its annual Bonfire and Firework Display at the local rugby club, which raises money for local charities.
- Saron Sports Association in Llandysul received £500 towards a fundraising event organised with local quoits team.
- Canton Rangers Under 11s football team in Cardiff were granted £281 to buy training tops while young players from the Radyr Rangers Under 10s boys and girls football team can stay dry in all weathers thanks to £1,000 sponsorship towards their kit and waterproof jackets.



## A chance for residents to get involved in Welsh music festival

Wales & West Housing has entered into a partnership to support volunteering opportunities at a music festival in Wrexham next year.

We have provided funding for up to 100 volunteers to join the three-day event, which runs from 16-18 May 2019.

Opportunities available range from assisting with the smooth running of the festival conference, to assisting festival venue managers and live music production experience.

Anne Hinchey, Chief Executive of Wales & West Housing, said: "Our sponsorship programme is centred around supporting organisations and events which will make a real difference to the community and this is a unique opportunity for us to do this by working with an international music festival.

"We are proud to be sponsoring the 2019 FOCUS Wales volunteer programme which will create new opportunities for our residents and members of



the wider community in Wrexham, where Wales & West Housing has more than 1000 homes and almost 2000 residents."

The festival features 200 bands across 20 stages at venues in Wrexham town centre, plus a conference programme featuring speakers from the music industry.

Applications to volunteer at FOCUS Wales are now open at [focuswales.com](http://focuswales.com)

# Gardening WITH GLENYS

*Glenys Vandervolk is an award-winning gardener, living at our St Mellons scheme in Cardiff. She is one of the leading lights in St Mellons Community Garden. In her regular column she shares her tips and advice to make your garden grow.*



Winter is well and truly with us now and while the garden is hard and frosty, there's still plenty of things you can do indoors over the holidays to prepare for spring.

For me, New Year's Day is the time to plant my vegetable and flower seeds. January is a good time to plant tomatoes, broad beans, peas, peppers and chili seeds. For flowers, I like to plant delphinium, sweet peas and cosmos. Cosmos are my

favourites as they start flowering in June and continue until November, bringing beautiful colour to your garden.

If you have over-wintered any plants, by covering them in fleece or taking them indoors or inside a greenhouse, March is the best time to check on them and take cuttings for planting out in the spring.

This summer we've had a great crop of fruit and vegetables at the St Mellons Community

Garden, which I've frozen ready to turn into my famous jams and chutneys.

A Christmas favourite, which my friends and neighbours enjoy with cold meats and cheese, is my simple sweetcorn and pepper relish. It's simple and quick to make, but delicious to eat or give as a gift. You can also spread it on your burgers.

Here's how you do it...

## Sweetcorn and pepper relish

### Ingredients

225g sweetcorn (frozen, fresh or tinned and drained)  
 1 red pepper (deseeded and finely chopped)  
 1 green pepper (deseeded and finely chopped)  
 2 sticks of celery (finely sliced)  
 450ml white wine vinegar  
 225g granulated sugar  
 2 tsp salt  
 2 tsp mustard powder  
 ½ tsp turmeric

### Method

1. Put all the ingredients into a large saucepan and heat up. Bring to the boil, stirring regularly to make sure all the sugar is dissolved.
2. Once they start to bubble, turn down the heat and simmer gently for around 20-30 minutes.
3. You can check when your relish is ready by drawing a spoon across the bottom of the pan. If it leaves a clear trail, it's ready. It should have a little liquid, but not be too sloppy.
4. Spoon into sterilised jars while hot (if not eating on the same day) or leave to cool before serving.



### Tip

To recycle and sterilise old glass jars, wash in hot, soapy water and rinse well. Dry in the oven for 15-20 mins at gas 1, 140°C, fan 120°C until hot and completely dry. Boil metal lids and rubber seals for 10 mins, then leave to dry.

# Christmas recipe



## Leftover turkey casserole

PREP: 15 MINS

COOK: 25 MINS

This one pot stew uses up all your roast dinner leftovers in one go and has a great honey mustard tang.

### Ingredients:

- 2 onions, finely chopped
- 1 eating apple, cored and chopped
- 2 tbsp, olive oil
- 1 tsp dried sage, or 5 sage leaves, chopped
- 2 tbsp plain flour
- 300ml vegetable or chicken stock
- 2 tbsp wholegrain mustard
- 2 tbsp runny honey
- 400g-500g leftover turkey, shredded
- about 350g leftover roasted vegetables like roast potatoes, parsnips, celeriacs and carrots

### Method:

1. Fry the onion and apple in the oil until softened in a casserole or deep pan. Stir in the sage for 1 min, then stir in the flour. Gradually stir in the stock followed by the mustard and honey.
2. Bring up to a simmer and stir in the turkey and roast veg. Cover and gently simmer for 15 mins until turkey is piping hot. Season and eat with mash or jacket potatoes.

# Snow covered branches

When the Christmas decorations have come down and everything looks a bit bare, why not fill a vase or container with twigs covered with imitation snow for instant home décor.

You will need:

- Branches/twigs (i.e. birch) from the garden/park
- Bleach or insecticide (but remember to follow the instructions for use)
- Imitation snow paint
- Wooden craft stick (lollipop stick)

- Vase or other container
- Newspapers

### Method

Gather a bunch of branches, kill off the bugs with the bleach or insecticide and give them a coat of imitation snow paint.

This is an easy winter craft that doubles as beautiful home décor. They could be used to create a swag, a centrepiece or to adorn a picture frame.

You can also use the snow paint on pine cones, or anything else you want to give a “winter look” to!



## Cheese and Onion Pie



PREP: 30 MINS

COOK: 60 MINS

### Ingredients

#### For the pie filling

- 800g Cheddar cheese, grated
- 50g unsalted butter
- 2 large onions, peeled and chopped finely
- 2 large eggs
- 5 tbsp double cream
- Sea salt
- Black pepper

#### For the water crust pastry

- 675g plain flour
- 255g unsalted butter
- 250ml whole milk
- Beaten egg yolk for glaze

### Method

#### For the hot water crust pastry:

1. Warm a mixing bowl and sift in the flour. Make a well in the centre.
2. Heat the butter and milk until just boiling and pour into the well in the flour. Mix quickly.
3. Continue mixing the pastry until the dough is smooth.

#### For the filling:

1. Preheat the oven to 180°C/Gas 4. Divide the

pastry into two balls, keeping one a little larger than the other.

2. Melt the butter in a pan and gently fry the onions until soft, then leave to cool.

3. Mix the onions in a bowl with the cheese, eggs, cream and seasoning, and mix thoroughly with your fingers.

4. Roll out the larger pastry ball into a lined greased baking tin. Pour the cheese and onion mixture into the pastry shell. Moisten the edges of the pastry and cover with the rolled-out top piece, carefully crimping the edges together.

5. Brush beaten egg over the top, make a hole in the middle and bake in the oven for 50 mins until golden brown and the cheese is bubbling from the hole.

6. Allow to cool before serving.



All  
change  
for  
Molly

Resident Barbara Turner adopted a female black kitten from Cats Protection. She took her back to her home at Bodalaw, Dowlais, Merthyr Tydfil, and named her Molly.

Barbara said: "When I got her home, she was so loving. She would follow me around the flat and sit on my lap purring. She would eat whatever I had for dinner. As well as her kitten food, mash, peas and gravy were her favourite."

Barbara and Molly became best of friends. When Barbara went out, Molly would sit by the door waiting for her to

come home.

One day, after six months, Barbara realised that her pet was not a Molly at all, but an Olly.

Barbara explains: "On my vet's advice, I had Olly neutered. However, everything changed. He would only eat Whiskas cat food; he refused to sit on my lap and totally ignored me. He started lunging at my bare arms and feet."

"All my neighbours agree that since his trip to the vet he has had a personality change. It's Molly no more, but evil Olly!!"

### Send us your pet stories

Do you have a favourite family pet you'd like to tell us about? Send your stories to: [communications.team@wwha.co.uk](mailto:communications.team@wwha.co.uk) or call **0800 052 2526**. Don't forget to include your name, address and phone number.



## Sudoku

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

## Autumn puzzle winners

Congratulations to the winners of our Autumn puzzle competitions. They were Mrs Pat Davies of Hafod Elfed, Carmarthen, who correctly found all the words in the wordsearch, and Ms Lynn Collard of Sydney Hall Court, Connahs Quay, who correctly solved the crossword puzzle.

## Win

To be in with a chance of winning a £30 shopping voucher for our wordsearch or crossword puzzle, simply send your entry with your name, address and contact details to Alison Stokes, Wales & West Housing, Archway House, 77 Parc Tŷ Glas, Llanishen, Cardiff CF14 5DU. All correct entries will be put into the draw and one lucky winner will be chosen for each puzzle and will receive a £30 shopping voucher. The closing date for entries is **31 January 2019**.

# Don't waste your unwanted items this Christmas

Christmas is just around the corner and there's no better time to start thinking about recycling. Whether you're buying a real tree or simply have unwanted items after Christmas Day with the arrival of new gifts, there are plenty of options to ensure items don't just end up in landfill.

### Christmas Trees

Many local councils will collect these from your home in early January so get in touch with yours to find out when.

### Christmas tree lights

Your local household waste site will recycle these for you if you're able to make it to one of them.

### Bikes

If you've got a bike you no longer want, why not consider selling it instead of throwing it away? Alternatively, the freecycle website (<https://uk.freecycle.org>) can put you in touch with people who will take your bike and put it to good use. Even those which are old or damaged could still be used for spare parts.

### Electrical items

Items such as kettles, toasters, TVs, radios and alarm clocks which are in good working order might be picked up on sites like eBay or the shpock app.

You'll usually find a sticker or a symbol on the item indicating that it can be recycled.

Recycle for Wales, the national campaign for recycling, has lots of useful tips, advice and information on how you can recycle your old and unwanted goods on their website [www.recycleforwales.org.uk](http://www.recycleforwales.org.uk)

# A day in the life of ...

## a Community Development Officer



If you've attended a Wales & West Housing Fun Day or thrown your old rubbish away at a community skip day, you may well have Rhiannon Ling to thank.

Rhiannon has been working as a Community Development Officer for Wales & West Housing, based in our West Wales office in Newcastle Emlyn, for less than a year.

In that time she has worked with residents and housing officers to develop many projects, events and services to benefit residents and the communities in Ceredigion, Pembrokeshire and Carmarthenshire. For example, she has worked with the Dogs Trust to run free micro-chipping sessions for residents' pets, she's organised summer fun days and family events, helped to raise sponsorship for community play facilities and brought local organisations and support groups together to make a difference to the areas where she works.

She even drives the mobile office out to remote rural areas to give residents the chance to meet

WWH staff for a chat or to get to know their local Neighbourhood Policing Team.

Before joining WWH, Rhiannon worked in food, tourism and farming and ran her own online gift business from home while her children were young. She also worked as a Community Regeneration Officer for Cantref Housing Association for eight years, so she is able to bring her experience and creativity to make things happen.

Another key area of her work is supporting residents to overcome barriers to help them get back into work, training or education. She has also helped some young mums to find funding for childcare so they can get back to work.



Rhiannon says: "I support residents to make their communities a great place to live.

"I enjoy meeting residents who want to develop projects in their communities. Over the spring and summer, I tend to support residents with developing community gardens where they are able to grow their own vegetables to share with other residents and wider community.

"I often attend community meetings for village halls, sporting groups or park committees who want to develop a building or provide a service. With my support we have organised fantastic events for local residents and also helped them to secure funding.

"It's important that local residents and communities know what we do and how we can support them. I have been making connections with community groups such as family centres, local Welsh play groups (meithrins), food banks, colleges and community hubs that are vital in our communities.

"I personally think I have the best job at Wales & West Housing as it is varied, enjoyable, fulfilling, challenging and very rewarding."



# What's on

## NORTH WALES

### 1-24 Dec: Breakfast with Father Christmas

Erddig, Wrexham.  
Join Santa in the Hayloft restaurant at the National Trust property from 9.30am -10.30am every weekend in December up to Christmas, plus Christmas Eve. Includes craft activity, songs, stories and a small gift for children. Prices from £12.95 adults/£13.95 children (National Trust members) [nationaltrust.org.uk](http://nationaltrust.org.uk)

### 8 Dec: Llandudno Santa Run

The Pier, North Shore Beach, Llandudno Promenade.  
Join the annual 5km run along Llandudno Promenade in your own Santa suit. Entry includes a Santa suit and your own medal. Registration from 9am, race starts at 11am. Entries £16 adults, £10 children. [bespokefitnessandevents.co.uk](http://bespokefitnessandevents.co.uk)

### 8-9,15-16, 22-23 Dec: Santa Trains

Harbour Station, Porthmadog.  
Santa and his elves will be passing through Ffestiniog and Welsh Highland Railway trains and giving out presents to children during the journey on 3 weekends this December. Prices from £14.50 adults & children aged 2-15, £3 for children under two. Call 01766 516070 for tickets. [Festrail.co.uk](http://Festrail.co.uk)

### 27 Dec: Llandudno Toy & Train Collectors Fair

Venue Cymru, Llandudno Promenade, Llandudno, Conwy.  
40 tables of buyers, sellers and collectors of new and second hand model railways. Car parking and light refreshments available. Adults £2.50, child with adult £1, concessions £2.

## MID WALES

### 21 Dec: Santa's Christmas Party

Llandrindod Wells Pavilion, Spa Road, Llandrindod Wells.  
A 45-minute interactive family show for 2-7 year-olds. Each child gets the chance to receive a special present from Father Christmas [admin@victorian-festival.co.uk](mailto:admin@victorian-festival.co.uk), Tel 01597 829498

### 31 Dec: New Year Walk

Llanwrtyd Wells, Powys  
Join in a short walk leaving the town square at 10.30pm on New Year's Eve. Burning torches will light the way for a procession which ends at the Abernant Lake Hotel, where a re-enactment of the Welsh tradition of 'Mari Llwyd' will take place. No need to book. [green-events.co.uk](http://green-events.co.uk), [info@mwtcymru.co.uk](mailto:info@mwtcymru.co.uk), Tel 01591 610666

### 30 Nov-16 Dec: Illuminated Gardens

Powis Castle and Garden, Welshpool, SY21 8RF  
Gardens, terraces and courtyards at Powis Castle will be lit until 9pm in the run-up to Christmas. Last admission 8pm. Tickets £7.15 adults / £3.60 children, free for National Trust members. [Nationaltrust.org.uk](http://Nationaltrust.org.uk), [powiscastle@nationaltrust.org.uk](mailto:powiscastle@nationaltrust.org.uk), Tel 01938 551920

### 19-26 Jan: The Westenders, Sleeping Beauty

Theatr Brycheiniog, Canal Wharf, Brecon, Powys  
Celebrate 70 years of the Westenders at Theatr Brycheiniog with a tale filled with comedy, romance, spectacular scenery and special effects. [Brycheiniog.co.uk](http://Brycheiniog.co.uk), [info@brycheiniog.co.uk](mailto:info@brycheiniog.co.uk), 01874 611622

## SOUTH WALES

### Until 6 Jan: Cardiff Winter Wonderland

City Hall, Cardiff.  
The ultimate Christmas experience takes over the lawns outside City Hall with ice skating, fun fair attractions, food, drink and plenty of Christmas cheer. [www.cardiffswinterwonderland.com](http://www.cardiffswinterwonderland.com)

### 6-8 Dec: Christmas Nights

National Museum of History, St Fagans, Cardiff.  
A traditional Welsh Christmas, why not grab a torch, wrap up warm and follow the star to St Fagans. With live performances, Father Christmas, craft workshops, festive food and craft markets and carol singing. Tickets £15 (adults) £8 (children). [www.museum.wales/stfagans](http://www.museum.wales/stfagans)

### Until 23 Dec: Cardiff Christmas markets

St John's Street and Working Street, Cardiff City Centre.  
Markets rival that of any other European city with plenty of opportunity to browse and buy. Open 10am – 6pm (Monday to Saturday) and 5pm Sunday.

### 8-16 Dec: Wooden Reindeer Trail

Bryngarw Country Park, near Bridgend.  
Santa has lost his reindeer. Can you find them? Outdoor family fun. Saturday 8 & Sunday 9 December; Saturday 15 & Sunday 16 December, 11am - 3pm. £3 per child. [www.bryngarwcountrypark.co.uk](http://www.bryngarwcountrypark.co.uk)



Christmas Nights, St Fagans, Cardiff

## WEST WALES

### 23 Nov - 2 Jan: Carmarthen Winter Wonderland

Carmarthen Park.  
All weather undercover magical real winter ice rink. Local Christmas market stalls, Santa's Grotto, themed heated Tipi bar/coffee house with fire pit, luxury seating and private karaoke booth. Traditional Christmas food stalls, family fun fair attractions and extreme rides. Open until 9pm daily. Free entry.

### 8 Dec - 2 Jan: Aberystwyth Winterland

Aberystwyth Castle.  
A first for the town, a spectacular undercover ice rink and Winterland overlooking the sea in Aberystwyth Castle. 11am – 8pm. [www.advancingaberystwyth.co.uk](http://www.advancingaberystwyth.co.uk)

### 16 Dec: Ras Sion Corn (Father Christmas race)

Llandysul Paddlers Centre, Llandysul.  
The annual race with all proceeds going towards Calon Tysul. From 12 – 2pm. Visit [www.calontysul.cymru](http://www.calontysul.cymru) to download an entry form to join in or just turn up and cheer on the runners.

### 7 Dec: Cardigan Giant Lantern Parade

Small World Theatre, Cardigan.  
Celebrate Visit Wales' Year of the Sea and creating giant lantern structures as well as hundreds of smaller lanterns for a spectacular procession. The Parade will follow Cardigan's High Street at 7pm and finish in the grounds of Cardigan Castle.



### Cakes, choirs and a visit from the King...

Residents at Llys Jasmine celebrated the 5<sup>th</sup> birthday of the opening of our first extra care scheme in style. They were entertained by an Elvis impersonator and young voices from the choir at Ysgol Bryn Coch school. Anne Hinchey, WWH Chief Executive, and Flintshire County Council's Cabinet Member for Social Services, Councillor Christine Jones, also joined in the residents' celebrations.

Since opening its doors to the first residents in October 2013, Llys Jasmine has become a meeting point for community groups such as Flintshire Disability Forum and Flintshire Sounds. Read more on page 6.