



Retired vicar tends to new flock at Cartrefi Conwy

A retired vicar is tending to a new flock after accepting a leading role representing the tenants of a housing association.

Having had one major change of career the Rev Mair Jones is clearly not afraid of new challenges, but she didn't expect to take on another important position in her retirement.

Now she has immersed herself in the task of representing nearly 3,800 tenants of the recently-formed Cartrefi Conwy..

The former Church in Wales vicar has been elected chair of the organisation's Tenants' Forum.

Cartrefi Conwy was formed last year after taking over the running of Conwy County Borough Council's housing stock.

The stock transfer happened after a majority of the council's tenants voted in favour of the move in a ballot.

One of the major benefits is that Cartrefi Conwy will be eligible to receive additional funding so that a higher level of repairs and improvements can be carried out.

Miss Jones, a native of Treuddyn in Flintshire, was a teacher for 30 years, the last 10 of which saw her working as a peripatetic special needs teacher in the Vale of Clwyd.

She retired from teaching in 1991 to train for two years at St Michael's College, Llandaff, for a new career in the Church.

On qualifying, she began her new life as a curate in Llangollen before moving to Llandrillo, near Corwen, and then to be Rector of Llanelian, Betws-yn-Rhos and Trofarth. After a reorganization the parish of Bryn-y-Maen then came under her wing.

Never having owned her own property, she put her name on the council's housing list when she moved into Conwy in 2001, and following her retirement in March, 2008, she was allocated a bungalow on the Fron Estate in Colwyn Bay.

“I moved in in April and was asked to join the Tenants’ Forum. I thought it would be something to do but didn’t realize what was involved, and now I appreciate how much work there is to be done,” she said.

The Forum is the platform for tenants to make their views known to Cartrefi Conwy’s management and to voice their concerns about the standard of the housing stock.

Just before Christmas the Forum established six working groups to concentrate on various aspects including repairs, housing management and communications, and there is also a Forum management committee, with Miss Jones at the helm.

“One of first things we have been asked to look at is the warden service in sheltered accommodation with a view to getting some uniformity in our service standards throughout the county,” she said.

She is very keen that all tenants participate in the work of the Forum and make their views known to ensure that standards are not only maintained but improved, and that tenants’ rights are protected.

“As a Forum we want to assist in the setting up of tenants’ and residents’ associations, which would include those who have bought their houses from Cartrefi Conwy or previously from the local authority,” she said.

“No doubt that some people were unsure about the transfer of the housing stock but I think the proof of the pudding will be seen in the new financial year after April 1 when money should become available for improvement schemes to be carried out.”

Though her work as chair is keeping her busy Miss Jones still has authority from the Bishop to officiate, but is undertaking little church work at the moment.

She is also an active member of Soroptimists International and of Merched y Wawr, and is a keen supporter of eisteddfodau.

In 2004 she was accepted into the Gorsedd of Bards at the National Eisteddfod in Newport, her bardic name being “Eliau Fair” after the village of Llanelian.

“I was a steward at the national eisteddfod for many years and I’ll be at Bala in August,” she added.