

Brian looks after tenants' rights

A former union official who has never been afraid of speaking up for people's rights has been elected to a key role in a new tenants' organization.

Brian Leggett, 65, from Llanfairfechan, is the first vice-chairman of the Tenants' Forum of Cartrefi Conwy, the housing association established to run the council houses and flats formerly the responsibility of Conwy County Borough Council.

Cartrefi Conwy took over last year following a vote by council tenants and the organisation, is now run by a Board. It is responsible for 3,800 homes throughout the county, including sheltered housing and flats.

Chairman of the Forum, which serves as a voice for the tenants, is the Rev Mair Jones of Old Colwyn, who lives on the Fron Estate, while Mr Leggett has lived for 40 years on Llanfairfechan's Pendalar estate.

Born in Liverpool, he moved to North Wales at the age of 10 and for several years worked as an electrician for British Rail, based in Llandudno Junction. In 1970 he joined the NHS, working at Bryn y Neuadd Hospital, Llanfairfechan, and remained there until his retirement two years.

Throughout his working life Mr Leggett was an active trade union member and served as chairman of the joint staff consultative committee, a role which he feels will serve him in good stead as vice-chairman of the Forum.

He was also active in establishing a tenants' association on the Pendalar estate some years ago.

"Whilst I feel I have a considerable amount of relevant experience the next 12 months is going to be a steep learning curve with the Forum," he said.

Mr Leggett concedes that he has little knowledge of the sheltered housing sector and disabled requirements he hopes that his experience will complement the skills of his chairman.

He also admits that when the idea of transferring responsibility for housing from the council was mooted he had grave reservations, but he now feels that it is the right way to progress.

"The Board has a duty to be cost-effective but it is vital that the tenants are treated fairly, and that is what I shall try to ensure," he said.

“It is the duty of the Forum to make sure that the work carried out to properties is up to standard. I shall speak my mind and make sure the Board knows what the tenants need.”

Mr Leggett has firm ideas on matters such as the occupancy of “void”, or empty properties, and the way repairs and maintenance can be carried out in the most effective and efficient manner, and he will not hesitate to make his views known.

He is also keen to see more young people with young families becoming involved in the work of the Forum, which currently meets every six weeks.

“We could do with their input to help ensure that we act in everyone’s interests,” he added.