

Welcome from the Chief Executive

This is the first newsletter from your new landlord, Cartrefi Conwy. I hope that you will find it interesting and informative. Please remember that we do want to hear your views so please contact us with any news items or ideas for future issues.

Being part of the new organisation is an exciting opportunity for us all and I am confident that my staff and I will be able to not only provide housing for you and future tenants, but also to improve the homes and communities that we cover for existing and future tenants.

We also hope to continue our good links with Conwy County Borough Council and will work alongside them to make sure that any services you receive from them are maintained.

Christmas arrangements

The offices will also close from 4pm on Christmas Eve, Wednesday 24 December 2008 and re-open at 8.45am on Friday 2 January 2009. During this time you can still continue to phone 0800 012 1431 for any emergency repairs, your call will be forwarded to the out of hours emergency service.

The Board and all Cartrefi Conwy staff would like to take this opportunity to wish you all compliments of the season and a happy new year.



Pupils celebrate land and cash

Thrilled youngsters from Ysgol Glan Gele are getting green fingered after Cartrefi Conwy agreed to allow them to create a garden on a small plot of our unused land in Peel Street, Abergele.

Operational Director, Gwynne Jones, and Board Members, Brian Horton and Dilys Mars-Jones, visited the site of the garden on Day One as part of a series of events set up to promote Cartrefi Conwy's launch on 29 September 2008.

Gwynne Jones said "It will be projects such as this one which help us to meet our key objective of 'Creating communities to be proud of'."

School officials told us that they are looking at plans created by the youngsters for the garden, which is in Peel Street. It is hoped that the garden will be completed in 2009.



"I'm hoping that we can turn the garden into something that the community can really take ownership of," said headteacher Julia Buckley Jones.

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Another event held to celebrate Cartrefi Conwy's launch day was a consultation event on a sheltered housing scheme in Llanrwst to discuss the proposed improvements to pathways in the area.

Staff also nominated an estate in Old Colwyn to receive some security lighting. This was installed on the 29th September.

New home for Head Office

As the newly-formed housing association we have marked the beginning of a new era for social housing in the borough. We have now also moved into our new headquarters.

Cartrefi Conwy has left the temporary home we had at Williams House, Mochdre and are settling into offices at Bryn Eirias, Heritage Gate, Abergele Road, Colwyn Bay LL29 8BY. The Area Offices and Building Maintenance Unit will remain in their current sites in Llandudno, Colwyn Bay and Mochdre.

The move to Bryn Eirias will allow us to improve services and provide a modern and efficient housing service to our customers.

Andrew Bowden, Chief Executive said, "I am extremely positive about our move and see it as the start of an exciting future for Cartrefi Conwy."

"After tenants voted in favour of transfer, Cartrefi Conwy

became an independent housing association and it is important that we have our own office to allow us to focus on improving the housing service we provide to our customers."

"The move will allow us to have all our back office operations, such as Finance, Capital Improvement and Community Involvement, in the same place, making our working more efficient."

The new premises in Colwyn Bay will be the administrative hub of the business.

Pam Lonie, Cartrefi Conwy's Board Chair, said "It's great to see Cartrefi Conwy playing such a key role in the district. Customers will be able to see a real change and we can continue to deliver the promises we made when tenants voted for transfer."



Our numbers have changed

Following the launch and the Head Office move, we have now installed a new phone exchange across all our office sites.

Important numbers for you to remember are below:

To report a repair – **freephone 0800 012 1431**

or local rate calls **01492 806040**

Llandudno Area Office – **01492 805632** or **805631** or **805633**

Colwyn Area Office – **01492 805600** or **805596** or **805598**

Head Office – **01492 805500**



How to pay your rent

There are several ways to pay your rent.

- By swipe card at PayPoint or the Post Office.
- Over the phone using your debit or credit card (you may have to pay a charge when paying by credit card). Phone 0870 243 6040, have your swipe card ready and follow the automated instructions.
- By direct debit through your bank. We can take direct debit payments on the 7th of each month only.
- By standing order through your bank every week, two weeks or month.
- If you want to pay by cheque or postal order, please make it payable to Cartrefi Conwy and send it to Bryn Eirias, Abergele Road, Colwyn Bay, LL29 8BY quoting your rent account number.



For more information on any of these methods, please phone your area office. We offer discounts to tenants who keep a clear rent account throughout a full financial year or pay their rent by direct debit or standing order. Full details are sent out each year with your rent notice.

If you have any questions about paying your rent or are having difficulty making the payments, you can contact your estate officer at your area office to discuss the best method for you to use.

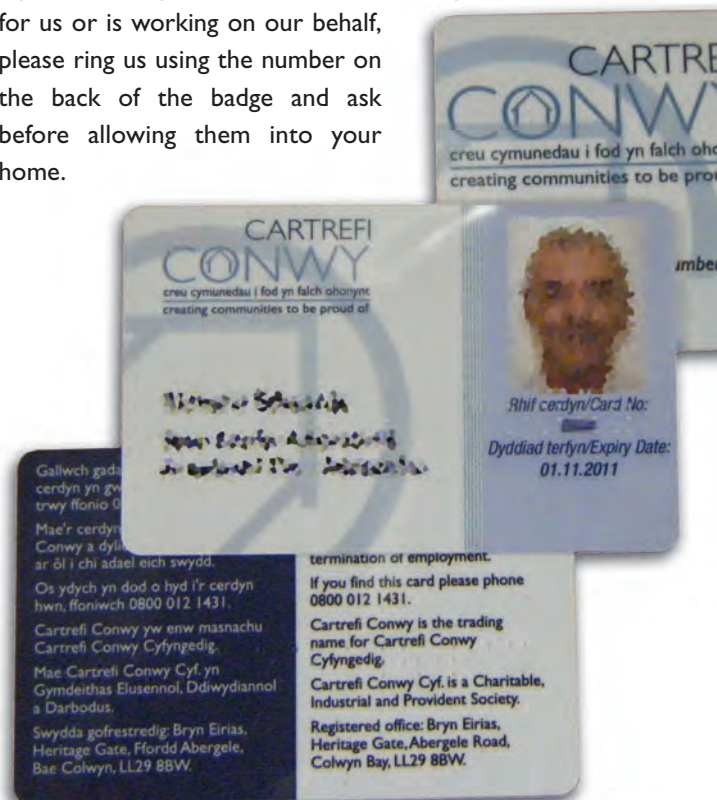
Prove it!

You should always ask any caller to show you their identification.

All our staff are issued with an identification badge which will tell you their name and job title. The card also has a picture of the staff member and shows an expiry date.

Contractors working with the Building Maintenance team will also be issued with an identification badge, it will have the name of the contracting company concerned on it.

If you are in any doubt as to whether the person works for us or is working on our behalf, please ring us using the number on the back of the badge and ask before allowing them into your home.



ARREARS LETTER APOLOGY

You may have recently received a letter from us with a notice of assignment of arrears attached to it.

This notice showed any arrears that may have been on your account on the morning of the day of transfer. Cartrefi Conwy had a legal obligation to send out these notices. This is because of the transfer that took place; we had to tell you that the arrears had been transferred to Cartrefi Conwy from Conwy County Borough Council so that you know who to pay them to.

We have had feedback from tenants about the letter and the formal wording of the notice and would like to apologise for any distress or concern that this has caused tenants.

Like the quarterly rent statements you are used to receiving, the balance on your account at the date of transfer does not take into consideration those people who have made payments on or since the 29th September nor those who pay by Direct Debit or standing order. Unfortunately there is no way around this as we had a legal duty to you to send these out. However, we are sorry for any upset caused and have taken the feedback received on board.

THE MAKE-UP OF THE BOARD

Just a little reminder – the Board of Management have overall responsibility for running Cartrefi Conwy including setting policies and directing activities. The Board is made up of 5 Tenant members, 5 Conwy County Borough Council nominees, and 5 Independent members.

The Board may also co-opt up to 2 members. Co-opted members have voting rights the same as full Board members but cannot be chairs or vice-chairs of committees or the Board. They may be brought onto the Board because of particular skills or experience they may have.

Name the newsletter

Starting afresh as Cartrefi Conwy gives us the opportunity to consult with you over a lot of things, including the name of this publication – your newsletter.

Please forward any suggestions you have to kath.molloy@cartreficonwy.org or phone 01492 805503.

The best three suggestions received will be put to the Tenants' Forum in the New Year to decide on the winner. All suggestions received, whether they go forward to the Forum or not, will go into a prize draw to win £10 in High Street vouchers.

Looking good!

All front line staff which you see on a regular basis, Building Maintenance operatives, Wardens and Housing Assistants in our Area Offices, have been issued with uniforms. These are black and clearly display our logo.

This is another way of identifying our staff and we hope you like the new look.



Please recycle this newsletter when you have finished with it.

Your Tenancy Agreements

Because we have transferred from Conwy County Borough Council to Cartrefi Conwy, we must give all tenants a new tenancy agreement. These should arrive, through the post, over the next few weeks. This is a very important document and you should sign and return it to us as soon as possible.

There will be a letter sent with the tenancy agreement which tells you exactly what you need to do.

ON THE WEB

Our website is up and running (www.cartreficonwy.org). We are continuing to update and add content to the pages to make them as useful to you and the public as we can.

If you have any suggestions for additional information that we could provide for you or any feedback on the information that is on the site, please let us know by emailing enquires@cartreficonwy.org or phone 01492 805500.

