

United Welsh Post



Page 04 Living Well Event

Lots of fun was had at our annual celebration with Thrive tenants.



Page 05 Rent First campaign

We're raising awareness of how rent is spent and the difference it makes.

United Welsh turns 30!



United Welsh Housing Association formed in 1989 to take on the houses held in Wales by the United Kingdom Housing Trust (UKHT), with little over 1,700 homes and less than 50 staff.

Fast-forward to 2019 and we are celebrating our 30th year with over 6,000 homes and as an employer of over 350 people, including staff at our asset management subsidiary Celtic Horizons, which was formed in 2013.

We are proud to have grown into a well-respected developer of new homes, but also for our work to create communities and transform lives.

Here are some of our highlights:

1996 - We merged with the South Wales Federated Housing Association to provide 425 supported housing bed spaces. Now we provide the most supporting housing bed spaces of any Association in Wales

1998 - Our first ever Customer Services team is created to provide a single point of contact for tenants and all our partners

2004 - United Welsh is named the Best Workplace in Europe for a not-for-profit organisation and 4th Best Workplace in the UK

2006 - We re-branded the Association as United Welsh to better reflect our ambition to provide more than homes for people in our communities

2010 - We build the UK's first Passivhaus, the multi award-winning Larch House in Ebbw Vale

2011 - We welcomed HRH The Princess Royal to officially open Plas Hyfryd, an Extra

Care scheme for older people to live well in Caerphilly

2016 - United Welsh is named the fifth best landlord in the UK by Inside Housing magazine and Lynda Sagona becomes Group Chief Executive

2017 - We launch the harmoni homes brand to sell homes on the open market and to offer LCHO schemes to first-time buyers. The profit from the sold houses will be used to build more affordable homes

2019 - We celebrate the build and handover of our 6,000th home!

Thank you to our tenants for your support over the last 30 years. Here is to the next 30!



Success at Welsh Housing Awards

The 2019 Welsh Housing Awards were very special for United Welsh with the Association winning three awards!

- **Working With Other Sectors award**
– Presented to our Wellbeing 4U community wellbeing service that is delivered in partnership with Cardiff and Vale University Health Board.
- **New Ideas and Approaches award**
– Presented to our Thrive team in partnership with Alertacall for implementing a new housing management contact system at our older persons schemes.
- **Building Safer Communities award**
– Presented to our Neighbourhood Safety Team for their dedication to tackling county lines crime in Cardiff.

Well done everyone.



School uniform swap shops well-received

Parents in Newport have saved hundreds of pounds thanks to uniform swaps organised with the Gwent Working Families team.

More than 150 jumpers, 50 coats, 30 blazers and various shirts, gym shorts and tops have been given away to families at Bettws Resilient Communities Hub to support parents needing uniforms for Newport High School and Monnow Primary.

Natalie Green, Working Families Team Leader said: "The cost of a school uniform can run into hundreds for a first-year student needing everything, and if you already have children in school, it is an especially costly time.

"The coats and blazers have been particularly well-received, which is not surprising given they are among the most expensive to buy."



Two uniform swaps have been held so far with another planned soon.

Natalie continued: "Bettws Resilient Communities Hub have helped massively, being a fantastic base and storing the uniforms.

"Shelly from Linc Cymru has also been instrumental in identifying where uniforms could be gathered from and delivering them to families who couldn't make the swap days.

"Thank you to all our partners."

Working Families is delivered by United Welsh, Tai Calon, Monmouthshire Housing, Newport City Homes, Charter Housing and Linc Cymru with funding from Big Lottery Fund Wales.

The Working Families team was setup to support working families in Newport, Blaenau Gwent, Caerphilly and Monmouthshire to improve their quality of life.

The team creates and supports community initiatives to help working families who may be experiencing issues with having enough money to support the family and pay bills; debt; childcare; secure employment; training and more.

RECIPE OF THE MONTH



Creamy tarragon chicken and potato bake

Courtesy of BBC Good Food

Ingredients:

- 60g unsalted butter
- 6 skinless boneless chicken thighs, cut into cubes
- 80g smoked pancetta, cut small
- 2 large onions, sliced
- 40g plain flour
- 500ml chicken stock
- 3 tbsp finely chopped tarragon
- 2-3 tbsp wholegrain mustard
- 4 tbsp double cream
- 2 x 450g packs fresh prepared mashed potato
- drizzle of olive oil

Method:

1. Melt 20g of the butter in a flameproof casserole dish over a medium heat. Season the chicken and add to the dish with the pancetta. Fry for 5 mins until the pancetta is crispy and the chicken browned and cooked through. Set aside in a bowl.

2. Lower the heat, add the remaining butter and, when it starts foaming, add the onions. Cook for 10 mins until softened, then stir through the flour and cook for another 2 mins. Remove from the heat and slowly whisk in the chicken stock. Return to the hob, bring to the boil and cook for 5 mins. Stir through the tarragon, mustard and cream, followed by the chicken and pancetta, and cook for another 5 mins until the sauce is thickened.

3. Heat the grill to high. Heat the mashed potato following pack instructions, then spoon on top of the chicken filling in the casserole dish. Smooth and swirl the potato over right to the edges, drizzle with a little olive oil and put under the grill for 8-10 mins or until the top is golden and bubbling.



Getting in touch

When you call please make sure you have all the necessary details to help us deal with your enquiry quickly and accurately.

Tel: 0330 159 6080
or 029 2085 8100



Fax: 029 2085 8110

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info@celtichorizons.co.uk

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Website
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Social Media:

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United Welsh App:
Download on the app store
or our website

Post: United Welsh
Y Borth, 13 Beddau Way
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We are able to provide information in other formats including large print, audio or an alternative language.

Please contact us for further assistance.

Trederlech Newydd is officially opened

Trederlech Newydd, a scheme of 21 new affordable homes at the site of the former industrial unit known as Cardiff Roofing in Rumney, Cardiff, has officially opened.

The scheme has Smart Technology features which have been pioneering for United Welsh.

The homes have internet-enabled boilers which allow tenants to manage their heating controls and monitor their energy use. The boilers will also help to mitigate fuel poverty as our asset management subsidiary Celtic Horizons can monitor their performance to support tenants and repairs can be quickly diagnosed and carried out efficiently.

Trederlech Newydd also has a communal free Wi-Fi system which is provided by Social Telecomms.

Cardiff Council Cabinet member for Housing, Councillor Lynda Thorne said:

“It was great to speak to a tenant and hear how happy she was.”



Be Prepared!

With weather forecasters predicting snow this winter make sure you stay safe and warm.

Wintry weather can cause problems in your home, especially with your heating system so we've put together some advice to help keep you and your family warm.

If you visit our website at <https://www.unitedwelsh.com/how-to-films/> you'll find some "how to," films to help you defrost a frozen boiler as well as make the most of your heating system.

Remember to keep an eye on the weather forecast over the winter period and make sure to take precautions if snow or ice are predicted.



Some top tips to stay safe this winter include:

- Wrapping up warm. Dress in layers and wear a hat, gloves and scarf
- Keeping the cold out
- Not using alcohol to keep warm
- Checking your heating
- Maintaining the temperature of your home
- Having warm food and drinks
- Staying active

Take special care when you are out and about and especially when driving and if you can please take the time to check on elderly or vulnerable neighbours.

If we do have bad weather, we'll be posting advice and tips on our website and our social media channels so please keep an eye out.



Living Well Celebrations

In October, we held our annual Living Well event at Islwyn Indoor Bowls at Pontllanfraith for people living at our Thrive schemes.

Over 100 tenants enjoyed the annual favourite bingo, as well as a buffet lunch and raffle.

Party-goers were also privileged to have a performance from the Connect Intergenerational Choir from Brynmawr, comprising of tenants from Wesley House and Saxon Court and pupils from St Mary's CIW School.



The raffle raised money for the 50+ Forum so thank you to everyone who bought tickets, and all those from the Forum who organised the event and made it such a success.



Llys Nant Y Mynydd recognised as a Dementia Friendly Community

Llys Nant Y Mynydd, United Welsh's Extra Care scheme in Nantyglo, Blaenau Gwent, has officially been recognised as a Dementia Friendly Community.

We were delighted to welcome Alun Davies, AM for Blaenau Gwent, who presented Llys Nant Y Mynydd with a Dementia Friendly Community Award.



To receive the award from the Alzheimer's Society, Llys Nant Y Mynydd had to show what has been done to raise awareness and promote understanding of dementia, including demonstrating how people living with dementia are understood and supported.

Llys Nant Y Mynydd also recently became a new venue for the Blaenau Gwent Gwenu Café, a community group that supports anyone whose life has been impacted by dementia.



Celtic Horizons Highly Commended

Celtic Horizons were Highly Commended in the Development and Maintenance category at the national Women in Housing Awards for their "Women in Construction" project, which raises awareness and increases recruitment of women working in the trades sector and supports qualification opportunities.

If you are interested in what training and qualifications opportunities Celtic Horizons has to offer, get in touch.



Weight loss through walking

68-year-old Rob Davidson from Cardiff started attending Health Walks with our Wellbeing 4U service to improve his fitness after beating prostate and kidney cancer. At first he struggled to walk for longer than five minutes but he kept going and after a few months, he walked a 10K for Cancer Research UK!

Before getting in touch with our social prescribing service Wellbeing 4U, Rob had been dealing with long-term weight issues. He wasn't active and didn't know how to make changes to eat more healthily.



Rob attended the Wellbeing 4U Weight Management programme to learn more about healthy eating to motivate him and still attended weekly health walks.

Rob said: "I feel like I'm going to live a lot longer, because I feel a lot healthier in every way. My negative thoughts are few and far between. I didn't think I'd live past 73 or 74 but now I feel that I will be around to receive that telegram from the Queen."

For more information about Wellbeing 4U, visit our website.



Rent First: Where rent goes



In a nutshell, rent is United Welsh’s main source of income. It helps us to maintain the homes we provide; build new homes and provide excellent services.

As part of our campaign: ‘Rent First – Because everything starts with home’, we have been raising awareness of how rent is spent so people can find out why it is so significant not just to our present tenants’ lives, but also future tenants and our organisation.

Without our rental income, United Welsh wouldn’t be able to support our tenants to live well and live safely in their homes. We also wouldn’t be able to provide more homes to those who need them.

As well as helping us to finance and build new affordable homes, United Welsh’s rental income also helps us to provide services to our tenants and the wider community.

It helps us to support tenants to maintain their tenancies, with our Neighbourhood team helping with tenancy issues, community regeneration activities, money advice matters and neighbourhood safety such as tackling anti-social behaviour.

Rent money is also used to keep our tenants safe, such as day to day repairs and safety checks required by law.

We don’t want anyone to lose their home. That’s why we would rather work with you to manage your debt and help you to prevent rent arrears now and in the future.



For support or advice about your rent or any other money issues, please contact our Money Advice team on 029 20 85 8100 / tellmemore@unitedwelsh.com

Jamie riding high after donation

Transport was an issue for 39-year-old Jamie Hancock from Cardiff. Our Working Together team were supporting Jamie with his employability skills when he secured a role in hospitality at St Fagans, but transport had previously made it difficult for him to sustain employment.

To help Jamie with his daily commute, we funded a bike so that he wouldn’t have to worry about transport in his new job.

Jamie said: **“Transport was a big barrier to me with getting work and keeping it, so thank you to United Welsh and the Working Together team for funding a bike for me.**

“Now I don’t have to worry with the commute back and forth but it’s also improving my health and fitness. The money I’m saving on public transport will also give me the chance to save for a car too.”

Get in touch for help with finding training, courses, work experience, apprenticeships and employment opportunities.



Volunteering Views

In the autumn we asked tenants to tell us what they thought of volunteering.

We want to support people who want to volunteer, but to help us improve, we needed your views about volunteering and what sort of barriers you think volunteers face.

Thank you to those people who completed the survey. The main findings were:

- Most people who volunteer do so to get involved in their community or to “give something back”
- People would like United Welsh to promote more volunteering opportunities and more training for volunteers

- People felt the biggest barriers to volunteering were transport, having little time or personal poor health
- There were mixed views about what rewards volunteers could be offered as a thank you, from more funding for projects through to prize draws and support with jobs and training.

Next, we’d love to hear your thoughts about Time Credits; are you a volunteer that spends them and if you don’t, why not? What would you like instead of Time Credits?

Please email joe.frampton@unitedwelsh.com or see page 2 for other ways to get in touch.



Service Charge review

Thank you to everyone who shared their thoughts about service charges in our recent survey.

We asked tenants for their views on the additional services we provide; for example, cleaning of communal areas and maintenance of communal grounds and gardens.

We had more than 300 responses from tenants across our Local Authority areas, including tenants in specialist accommodation, which overall is equivalent to 8% of tenants who receive service charges.

Congratulations to Sharon Morgan from Caerleon Road; the lucky winner of £50 shop-

ping vouchers from the survey prize draw!

Next, we are developing an action plan to deliver improvements based on your feedback, working in partnership with our repairs subsidiary Celtic Horizons.

There will be an update about the review in the next edition of the Post but in the meantime, if you want to tell us more, please contact Service Charge Project Coordinator Alex Fisher on 0330 159 6080 or email alex.fisher@unitedwelsh.com



Protect yourself from Legionnaires' disease

Legionnaires' disease is a form of pneumonia that can affect anybody. It is caused by inhaling small droplets of water from contaminated water sources containing Legionella bacteria.

It can be found in water systems, storage tanks, pipe work, taps and showers. Other potential sources include humidifiers, water features, garden hoses, water butts and sprinklers.

- Run all showers, baths, wash basins and sinks continuously for five minutes to flush through any form of bacteria
- Clean and maintain all taps and shower heads regularly
- Switch your water heater on and leave it on for an hour before using the water

- Ensure rooms are well ventilated and turn taps and the shower off securely to reduce the fine droplets of water that are released
- Don't use a water butt to supply hose pipes or toy water pistols. The water may have been there for a while so the spray is likely to contain bacteria.

For more information, please visit <http://www.hse.gov.uk/legionnaires/>



Fire safety tips

It is important to know the basic steps to follow to prevent a fire in your home.

- Plan how you would get out if there was a fire. If you live in a house, make an escape plan and share it with family. If you live in a block of flats or have a communal area, get to know your building's evacuation plan
- Test your smoke alarm regularly to make sure they are working and make sure all members of your family are familiar with the sound
- Don't leave cooking unattended or get distracted while cooking
- Make sure candles are not on or near anything that could catch fire
- Make sure heaters aren't covered
- Use a maximum of one plug in each socket and never use them if wet



- Close all doors, switch off and unplug your appliances such as TV's every night. Keep your phone and any mobility aids close by if you need them
- Put out and dispose of cigarettes properly and never smoke in bed
- Keep matches and lighters away from children.

If you have any concerns about fire safety, please get in touch.

