

Time In

with Melin



Working together

Find out who put together this art for Public Health Wales

Welcome to Time In!

Our last Time In publication was such a success we decided to do another edition. It really has been a strange six months, but with things getting a bit more like they used to be we wanted to celebrate the good news stories you have shared with us, some of the achievements of our teams, the help we have available for you; money and energy advice, and employment success for residents and an update on our maintenance service and what that means for you.

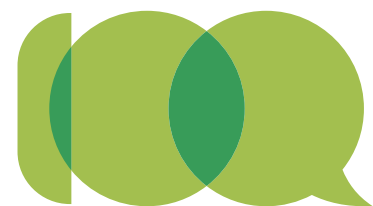
We have also included a handy guide of what to do if you smell gas on page 21, the great deal we have secured for residents for home insurance on page 18, and an update on our new developments (page 26).



Paula Kennedy

100 Voices

Whilst on lockdown our 100 Voices has still been working with us to help improve the services you received



Our wonderful 100 Voices volunteers haven't let lockdown stop them and they have continued to share their opinions on our services, even embracing new technology like Zoom to make sure they remain part of the conversation.

Since April we have heard from those of you on 100 Voices who have given us views on:

- Our community engagement strategy;
- How we explain service charges to our residents; and
- Our maintenance service.

Residents on our three focus groups joined us in Zoom rooms to talk about how they can help fellow residents.

The Communities Group gave £3,000 to our Money Advice team who bought Tesco vouchers to give to residents who were struggling financially through lockdown. The vouchers helped people who were struggling to buy even the essentials like bread, tea, and even baby milk.

The group also gave £620 to community groups to help with their garden projects.



Some of our group and staff took part in a Zoom meeting

The Customer Service Group:

Volunteers have looked into how we explain our service charges to residents and are sending their findings to managers of that service area. They are now deciding which service area to examine next.

The Disability Group:

Volunteers on this group decided that they will be supporting carers this year. They want to do all they can to raise awareness and support the work that carers do and the benefit they bring to our communities. If you are an unpaid carer, providing vital support to a friend or family member, the group would love to hear from you.

If you are interested in being a member of 100 Voices please contact communities@melinhomes.co.uk.



Congratulations to Shelagh Little who was selected as the winner of our quarterly 100 Voices draw and was given £25 in high street vouchers.

Benefit advice, help and support



Money

Many of our residents have had to claim Universal Credit due to the effects of Covid-19. We know these are difficult times, but please call us and let us help you.

One resident who was helped by Fiona and Lloyd said: “I was worried about my money and debt but Fiona was brilliant. I also have to thank Lloyd and the whole Money Advice team. I really rate them very highly.”

Please call **01495 745910** if you need help with money or benefit worries:

- Universal Credit or benefit applications;
- Grant applications;
- Safe money lending options – please don't use loan sharks, contact us for help;
- Getting help from the food bank;
- Getting help for free school meals;
- Switching energy suppliers;
Give our energy advisor, Dave, a call if you need help with switching energy suppliers or you have energy debt.



Dave (the human)


TV licence changes

TV licencing for the over 75s is changing. You can now only claim a free TV licence if you claim Guaranteed Pension Credit – this is different to normal Pension Credit. Give us a call if you are confused.

Rent

We know talking about rent debt can be scary, but if you don't talk to us then we can't help. The longer you leave it, the harder it will become. Please call your Income Officer today, we are here for you.

Ways to pay your rent



How to pay your rent using our 24 hour payment line

1

Call 01495 745910 and press 1 to make a payment

1	2	3
4	5	6
7	8	9
*	0	#


2

Have your tenancy reference number ready to input...

...You'll find it on any letter we've sent you

Tenancy Ref: 17821
25th May 2017

Mrs A Resident
123 Sample Street
Pontypool
Torfaen



Contact details:
Customer Contact
01495 745910


3

1...7...8...2...1...


The tenancy reference number will be repeated back to you...

4

...if it's correct then press the star (*) button. You will then hear your balance and be able to make a payment.



you can also pay your rent by logging into your online account at www.melinhomes.co.uk, through www.allpay.net or by Direct Debit.



Pension Credit

Are you of pension age? Did you know Pension Credit is the most under-claimed benefit there is? Claim what you are entitled to – call our Money Advice team today. You can also claim online – search ‘Pension Credit’ at www.gov.uk.

Employment advice and support

Are you worried about job security? Have you been furloughed and are worrying about returning to work? Or are you looking for work?

Our employment advisors can help you find a way just like they helped Sam, working with him and his work coach for over a year.

continued...

...Employment advice and support continued

Our support has helped him to get his driving theory test, driving lessons and eventually his driver's licence. This has meant he could get a job with a well-known restaurant chain as a delivery driver, but now he also has his sights set on getting his HGV licence.

Sam recently told us that the help he'd received had 'changed his life for the better'.

He told our employment officer Aaron: "Melin as an organisation is truly unique." He is grateful that by investing in him he's been able to secure employment and by being able to drive his employment prospects have also increased.

An added bonus, he said, is that he can now take his daughter out at the weekends and they can do so much more together.

If you need a helping hand to get your career back on track or help boosting your skills email employment@melinhomes.co.uk

Our employment team can help with:

- Funding for training
- Helping you find a job
- Interview techniques
- Finding the right volunteering for you.
- Work placements
- Writing a winning CV
- Confidence building

Our maintenance service and you

Our maintenance service is back up and running, things will look a little different but rest assured the health and safety of our residents and staff is our top priority. Please be patient with our teams as due to the unprecedented times we understandably have a backlog.

All our teams are working extra hard right now to reduce the number of repairs that have built up during lockdown. They will contact you to rebook repairs that were due to take place during lockdown if they fall within our Tier 1 category. Please visit our

website at www.melinhomes.co.uk/coronavirus for more details.

Our teams appreciate your patience during these difficult times. Especially some of the lovely feedback you have given us about our maintenance team:

A resident went out of her way to contact us on Facebook about Johnny Morgan saying: “I just wanted to say thank you very much, Johnny you are a credit to Melin. You did a fantastic job, and were just lovely.”

A resident also contacted us about her gas service saying: “I was very pleased with my gas service. Tom Osmond was on time, clean, presentable and very well-mannered.” Great work Tom!

Sheree contacted us to big up our electrician Howard, saying:

“My sister Keri had an issue last week where her intercom and TV weren’t working and we called out an engineer to help resolve the issue.

“A lovely gentleman called Howard attended the call out and I just wanted to say that he dealt with my sister who has learning disabilities amazingly.

“He was determined to resolve Keri’s issue and was so polite and helpful with her and I just wanted to say a big thank you as I believe he went above and beyond to help her. He’s a credit to Melin.”

What a lovely compliment, well done Howard.

Gas and heating engineer Nick Hodge has a fan. Mrs Templeman wanted us to know how grateful she was to him for attending so quickly and resolving a couple of other niggly things she had going wrong! She couldn’t thank him enough.



Howard is indeed “a lovely gentleman”

Melin Homes Service status

Please note, our services may change depending on current advice from the government. To stay up to date please visit www.melinhomes.co.uk/coronavirus or call us on **01495 745910**.



Face to face meetings

All of these have been cancelled. Queries relating to your tenancy or anti-social behaviour will now take place via email, video call or by phone.



Melin Homes offices

All of our offices are closed and staff are working from home.



Communal lounges

Along with guest bedrooms at our sheltered and extra care schemes have been closed.



Play areas

Playgrounds on our estates are closed.



Repairs

We are now carrying out Tier 1 and some Tier 2 repairs, as well as emergency and urgent repairs. For more info on the classification of emergency and urgent repairs, visit www.melinhomes.co.uk/coronavirus.



Allocations and lettings

We are continuing to work on and let properties to support those in high housing need. For more information visit www.melinhomes.co.uk/coronavirus.



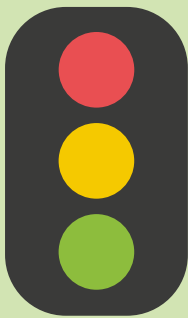
Independent Living

All sheltered and extra care schemes are closed to non-essential visitors. Repairs work in communal areas only. Visit www.melinhomes.co.uk/coronavirus for more information.



Ending a tenancy

You can drop keys into a drop box at our offices or call us to collect.



We understand that at this worrying time you may have some concerns, please talk to us and we can reassure you that the safety of you and our staff is considered at all times.



Grounds maintenance

Grounds maintenance are continuing as normal.



Community safety

We are still here to help if you need to report anti-social behaviour. Call **01495 745910** or visit www.melinhomes.co.uk. Report criminal acts to Police on **101** or **999** in an emergency.



Safety checks

Fire alarm testing and other safety checks are continuing as normal.



Contact us

We are still here for you. You can call us on the usual number or email enquiries@melinhomes.co.uk or get in touch on social media. See page 13 for full info.



Window cleaning

Window cleaning is continuing as normal for general properties, and has resumed for our schemes.



Rent payments

Payments can still be made. For all the ways to pay your rent check page 5.



Gas servicing

Safety inspections are continuing as normal.



Cleaning services

We're continuing to provide essential cleaning and hygiene services where possible.

Here is what you told us about our staff

We are still receiving so many compliments about our staff, they truly are a credit to us. We don't have space for them all so we've picked some of our favourites.



Peter (left) and Stuart have been working hard to deliver essentials

Helping the NHS

We received a lovely letter sent in on behalf of ABUHB expressing their thanks to our partners at Care & Repair Monmouthshire and Torfaen during the current Covid-19 pandemic.

Stuart and Peter have been delivering essential donations daily. That coupled with Nic and Mandy providing essential transportation has meant patients and residents throughout Gwent have received essential items without delay.

Tanya, Associate Director of Nursing told us: "You and your team have gone the extra mile supporting the NHS."

Maria voices her pleasure

David Wallace contacted us about Maria, one of our residents that he has been working with. He said: “She is so grateful for not only everything I have done for her, but for Melin as a whole. She also mentioned Gavin Payne and said that everyone at Melin have been absolutely fabulous and very, very helpful.” Well done everyone, true leaders of great customer service.

She was so pleased with her Melin experience she would like to volunteer for 100 Voices. Maria, we can't wait for you to join!

Fruit aplenty

We have been donating fruit to local food banks for the last five months so far we have donated over £700 worth of fruit, that's 31 boxes. 'Grape' job everyone!

Chris from The Gateway Church in Abergavenny who have received some of the fruit contacted us saying:

“Once again, just wanted to say thank you so much for the fruit you have been sending us, it has been such a blessing.

“Really appreciate the team at Melin Homes for your invaluable support.”

Support our residents

One of our residents was struggling to find work due to Covid-19. The Money and Energy Advice teams completed a benefit check and gave advice. We sent him food and Tesco vouchers and Aaron is supporting him to find work. A great team effort.

When the resident found out about the vouchers he burst out crying. He couldn't believe the lengths we have gone to in supporting him. He said that if there was anything he could ever do for Melin or its residents to return the favour, he would. He was extremely humbled by what had been done for him. Stories like this make the hard work our teams put in worthwhile. Well done to everyone involved.



Great work from Aaron

A glowing review

Carol wrote a review on our Facebook page, saying: “We have been with Melin Homes since they took over from Gwerin. I have never had any problem with any of them, any repairs reported with Melin have been dealt with efficiently and professionally and I would recommend them.” Thanks Carol, that’s a lovely review.

Sam Howells recently had a glowing compliment from a resident’s nephew who contacted us to say:

“I would like to bring to your attention the outstanding service provided by a member of your staff, Sam Howells. My elderly uncle James has been on Homeseekers looking for a new home that suits his physical/medical needs for many years. He was successful with a recent bid for a ground floor flat in Croesyceiliog just as lockdown began.

“Ms Howells has been absolutely fantastic, she has showed patience and compassion in spadefuls, and has provided advice and support throughout this difficult process. Nothing has been too much trouble for her, she is a credit to your organisation. I can only say thank you so much for her professional approach and kindness. Please pass on our sincere thanks.”

That is a truly lovely compliment, and pass it on we did. Great work Sam.



Sam – always helpful!

We are always here to help, please call us on 01495 745910 or check page the next page for other ways to get in touch.

An official compliment

Councillor Giles Davies was so impressed with Zoey from our Customer Contact Team, he posted on Twitter:



Cllr Giles Davies
@gilesdaviestcbc

@MelinHomes could you thank Zoey from Ebbw Vale on Customer Services for her outstanding service to my mother yesterday. Credit where it's due, she went above and beyond and is a credit to your organisation. She brightened up an 87 year olds day during isolation.



Well done Zoey – great job as always.



How to contact us

There will always be someone at the end of the telephone but there are lots of other ways to get in touch with us from 8 till 6 Mondays to Thursdays and 8 till 5 on Fridays:

- Email: enquiries@melinhomes.co.uk
- Web chat: chat to us using the box in the corner of our website.
- Type your message in the contact form on the right hand side of every page of our website (except the home page).
- Find us at www.facebook.com/melinhomes
- Join us on Twitter [@melinhomes](https://twitter.com/melinhomes)
- Text: **07860 027935**
- Tel: **01495 745910**
(For emergencies outside of our normal hours select option 2.)

Poet pens thanks to his 'guardian angel'



Brian (left) was inspired to write a thoughtful poem to Claire

When Abergavenny resident Brian was taken ill suddenly during lockdown he found support and friendship from scheme manager Claire Boshein who he dubbed his 'guardian angel'. She rang him every day through his hospital stay to chat and to make sure he was OK. As lockdown prevented him from meeting Claire to say thank you in person he put pen to paper and wrote her this poem.

The world needs friendly folk
like you
in this troubled world
it's refreshing to find
someone who still has
the time to be kind
someone who still has faith
to believe that the
more you give the more you
receive
someone who is really
by thought - word
to reach out a hand

in the hour of need
let not your heart be troubled
when the days are long
and the way seems dark
and you can't hear the song
of the bluebird or lark
may the words in this verse
brighten your day
and chase your worries and
all your cares away
God Bless you and keep you
till we meet again.



Activities

Kindness wordsearch

S Z C Q F K L U I P O P A E C S G O I A	HELPING HAND
P H E L P I N G H A N D S D M P R N P S	FRIENDLY
H X O X J D Y E R T R A T F G H A V B D	POETRY
O V V P C R T F R I E N D L Y J T C O E	PATIENCE
N B N H P B D W M E Q S N A W K I E I E	COMPASSION
E B M Q O I W M Q N S U P P O R T R T D	SUPPORT
C L Z G E N N O I C E R V B L S U T U D	PHONECALL
A I W G T E G G P E Z F C E X D D Y U O	SUPERSTAR
L K S A R A T S R E P U S X Z Y E T U O	GOOD DEEDS
L J D F Y K H J N O I S S A P M O C Y G	GRATITUDE
	SHOPPING

Try a simple recipe – pancakes!

It doesn't have to be Shrove Tuesday for you to enjoy a pancake. They are perfect treat any time of the year.

Ingredients For 12 pancakes

- 125 g plain flour
- 250 g cold milk
- Two large eggs
- 40g melted butter
- 20g vanilla sugar (optional)
- A pinch of fine sea salt

Method

- 1 Combine all the ingredients in a bowl and whisk together to make a smooth batter. Cover and leave to rest in the refrigerator for two hours. The batter should be the consistency of single cream, add a little more milk if necessary.
- 2 Heat a heavy-based non-stick pan, using a little oil if required. Remove from heat and ladle a small amount of batter into the pan.
- 3 Swirl the batter around so that it is evenly spread, cook until the edges start to come away from the pan about 60 seconds.
- 4 Peel the pancake loose and flip it over to cook the other side for about 30 seconds. Then turn it out onto a plate and eat! Yum.

Our Lockdown Legends

Lovely to see that some residents of Withy Close have worked together to keep their street looking good during lockdown.

A few of them got together to cut the grass and tidy up the area. One resident's son who is a chef and currently out of work, has gone around and cleaned people's fascias and guttering. Residents told Kate Pope-Makowski that he's done a great job. Great to see some community spirit – well done!

Gwyneth's 100 laps



Our inspirational resident Gwyneth (aged 87) has completed 100 laps of her garden for St David's Hospice. She was accompanied across the finish line by her granddaughter and great grandchildren and cheered on by her neighbours.

She has now raised £70 for St David's Hospice and gained a new-found confidence in using her walker. Gwyneth said "I've really enjoyed it" and her neighbours say they're thinking of keeping up the daily walk too.

Peter's good deeds

When Peter saw a 'heart-tearing' message on a Covid-19 Facebook support group he had to help.

The message was from the parent of an Intensive Care Unit nurse working at the Royal Gwent who said his daughter was working 12

to 14 hour shifts and unable to take proper breaks, only stopping for quick snacks to sustain her.

“I showed this to my wife and we decided to make a personal contribution. We went to a supermarket (before restrictions) and purchased drinks and snacks for ICU. We took these to the hospital, taking a photo of the car full of goodies. After posting these pictures, I started getting messages from others wishing to donate.” Peter told us.

Peter’s good deeds started a ripple through the community with others eager to help.

He also wrote to supermarkets asking for essentials for patients in hospital that visitors would usually bring in from toiletries to bedware and snacks. One supermarket responded, Peter posted photos on Facebook and again more generous people wanted to make donations.

At Easter, Peter and a lady called Claire (who was also keen to help) collected more than 250 Easter eggs and delivered them to care homes and hospitals

“Towards the end of April, I noticed others were now doing much the same as I was so I made contact with them.” Peter added.

“Now there’s a team, co-ordinated by Justine. In the team, there are seven or eight drivers. Therefore, I no longer have to cover the whole of Newport. I cover Caerleon, Beechwood, St Julians, Riverside, Maindee, Chepstow and Corporation Roads, and Lliswerry etc.

“We are all collecting and distributing to the hospitals and care homes.”

Peter says they are “collecting from the community for those who care for our community”.

Peter really is a Lockdown Legend and his story proves that kindness is contagious.

Lockdown Legend



Peter Hill

Fly-tipping

We wanted to remind you that you must always use a registered waste carrier to remove unwanted household items and excess rubbish from your homes.



With over 70% of fly tipping incidents in Wales containing household rubbish, the Welsh Government and Fly-tipping Action Wales call on people to: take responsibility for their excess rubbish; keep their local area clean; and avoid fines and prosecution by using their duty of care to ensure they know where their waste is going and not put it in the hands of fly-tippers.

While Wales has led the way when it comes to the amount of waste being recycled, there has been concern over an increase in individuals posing as legitimate waste disposal businesses on social media; during the temporary closure of waste and recycling centres due to the Covid pandemic.

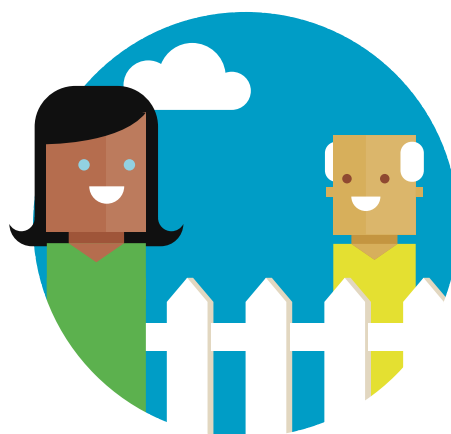
The Welsh Government campaign urges everyone to use their duty of care and ensure all waste is disposed of legally by a registered waste carrier and to report any fly tipping to their local authority. A list of registered waste carriers can be found on the Natural Resources Wales website at naturalresources.wales/checkwaste

MyHome contents insurance

Melin insures your building but if you want to protect your personal items against theft, fire, vandalism, burst pipes and other risks you may want to consider contents insurance.

We have teamed up with Thistle Home Insurance to provide reasonably priced home contents insurance. It starts from as little as £1 per week. Call them today to protect your treasured possessions on **0345 450 7288**.

Please be nice to your neighbours



We have seen an increase in reports of anti-social behaviour, with more people staying at home we understand it is a difficult time but it is more important than ever to be respectful of your neighbours.

The team are dealing with an increase in reports of anti-social behaviour. The top three complaints they are seeing are:

- 1 Noise;
- 2 People not adhering to social distancing;
- 3 Verbal abuse/harassment and threats.

Our Community Safety team continues to work with local police to protect residents and communities, please do your bit too and be nice to your neighbours.



← Michelle from the team received a lovely thank you from a resident and on behalf of the street, saying, “thank you for your hard work and persistence”. She said Michelle “really went above and beyond and was caring to everyone”. Great job as always Michelle.

Helping our heroes

We were contacted after a local paramedic was broken into and all of his equipment was stolen. Our 100 Voices group funded new equipment and donated tea and coffee to the ambulance station in Pontypool.

We are all very grateful for the amazing job front line staff always do, but especially during Covid-19. They have worked through horrific times, many trying to balance family responsibilities too. Being able to help in just a small way was a privilege.

Gas Safety Week

It's Gas Safety Week from the 14th to the 20th September, the 10th year of raising gas safety awareness.

10 top tips to stay safe

- 1 Only use a Gas Safe registered engineer to fit, fix and service your appliances. You can find and check an engineer at their website – GasSafeRegister.co.uk or by calling **0800 408 5500**.
- 2 Check both sides of your engineer's Gas Safe Register ID card. Make sure they are qualified for the work you need doing. You can find this information on the back of the card.
- 3 Have all your gas appliances regularly serviced and safety checked every year. If you rent your home ask for a copy of the landlord's current Gas Safety Record.
- 4 Know the six signs of carbon monoxide (CO) poisoning – headaches, dizziness, breathlessness, nausea, collapse and loss of consciousness. Unsafe gas appliances can put you at risk of CO poisoning, gas leaks, fires and explosions.
- 5 Check gas appliances for warning signs that they are not working properly e.g. lazy yellow flames instead of crisp blue ones, black marks or stains on or around the appliance and too much condensation in the room.
- 6 Fit an audible carbon monoxide alarm. This will alert you if there is carbon monoxide in your home.
- 7 Keep vents and chimneys clear. Make sure you don't block any vents, as they are vital to ensure gas appliances burn properly, and chimneys need to be cleaned and checked regularly.
- 8 Use gas appliances only for their intended purpose. Don't be tempted to use them for something they weren't meant for (for example, using a gas cooker to heat a room).
- 9 Know the emergency procedure. If you smell gas or suspect immediate danger, make sure you call Wales & West as shown on the previous page.
- 10 Spread the word. Share vital gas safety information with friends, family and neighbours to make sure your community stays safe.

If you need to find a Gas Safe registered engineer in your local area, you can type your postcode or town name into the search bar on the Gas Safe Register www.gassaferegister.co.uk.

Gas Safety Week

14th to 20th September



If you smell gas

If you smell gas in your home or business, it's best to get in touch straight away with Wales & West Utilities. You can call them free on **0800 111 999**. They have a plan of six easy steps. Here's what to do:

Step 1: Call Wales & West immediately.

On freephone **0800 111 999**. They are available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year and will send out an engineer to keep you and your property safe.

Step 2: Turn off all your gas appliances

And, if possible, switch off the gas at the meter (unless the meter is in the cellar or basement, in which case don't go in).

Step 3: Open windows and doors

Open all your windows and doors.

Step 4: Do not use any electrical appliances

This includes switching your lights on or off.

Step 5: Do not smoke

Do not smoke or use naked flames.

Step 6: If there's a smell of gas in the cellar or basement

Please wait outside or with a neighbour.

For more information go online and search 'Wales & West Utilities smell gas'.

Around the schemes...

Scheme Managers have been keeping in touch with residents throughout the past few months. They are now working from schemes more often having put safe systems in place so you will see them around more.

To keep everyone safe and reduce the risk of infection, please remember to follow the guidance including keeping a two metre distance from other people and washing your hands regularly.

Roderick Hill Court heroes

Our fantastic Tredegar residents have really been looking out for one another during lockdown. They've been phoning each other, sharing jigsaw puzzles, having barbecues, fish and chips, and curries in the garden, and celebrating birthdays from a safe social distance. Scheme Manager Clare Harris said that Steve A has also the time to complete online language courses, try out new healthy recipes and visit local childhood haunts.

Another resident, Steve C has 'been a star' – he took it upon himself to clean contact points in his block of flats daily, he also went shopping for some of his neighbours, gone with them to appointments and even helped a neighbour with arranging his car insurance.

Dave, Cyril, Mervyn and Phil have made sure the garden was kept in top shape by pruning, watering, dead-heading and taking care of the borders and boxes around the scheme.

Well done to them all for coming together and helping each other out in these tricky times.

Being neighbourly is easy as ABC

Residents at Aneurin Bevan Court (ABC) in Pontypool have missed having their scheme manager Ceri onsite during lockdown, but they made sure they continued to look out for each other.

See our photo of Lorraine on the next page, calling bingo outside for one of their socially-distanced get-togethers.





1 **59**

Here's Lorraine at Aneurin Bevan Court doing a great job as a bingo caller.

We're sure she did a great job at being heard thanks to the loudspeaker!

Another resident, Madeline at the scheme is renowned for her poetry skills. She entertained her neighbours with her verses at their events and wrote this lovely poem about lockdown life this summer...

Summer 2020

Coronavirus arrived, oh what a bore!
 Cannot mix and play bingo or quiz anymore,
 No longer a scheme manager at ABC
 To cheer us up with games and a nice cup of tea
 But thanks to the residents especially Lorraine
 We started bingo and quizzes again,
 Sat correctly spaced in our own chairs
 Enjoying company in the fresh air.

We can look at the flowers, their colours so bright
 Planted by Ken and Mike and watered each night.
 We relax and listen to music from a CD
 And chat and laugh until it's time for tea.

There has been offers of help and treats galore
 Crosswords and newspapers through my door,
 Some of the residents cannot come out to play
 But carers and Ceri are in touch every day

Three cheers for the residents of ABC and welcome
 Back to our scheme manager Ceri.

by Madeline - resident of ABC



Flu vaccine

The potential for co-circulation of Covid-19 at the same time will make this year's flu vaccination programme even more vital. Alongside extending the programme it's important that those in the existing eligible groups including those aged over 65, pregnant women, and people with medical conditions are vaccinated first. Increasing uptake in health and social care workers will also be a key priority this season.

Subject to confirmation by the UK Government, that additional vaccine supply will be available, those who will additionally be included in this year's flu programme include:

- households of people in the shielded group;
- lowering the eligibility age from 65 to over 50 year olds – who will be vaccinated in a phased approach.

The NHS will get in contact with those who are eligible.

Additional supplies of the nasal spray flu vaccine offered to children will be used to maximise uptake in the vaccination programme offered to two and three year olds, and to all children in primary schools.

The Minister for Health and Social Services, Vaughan Gething said:

“This winter more than ever we need to protect the most vulnerable in our community and continue to protect our NHS.

“By extending the flu vaccine to more people than ever before we can help prevent people becoming ill and reduce pressure on the NHS this winter. I would urge anyone who is eligible to have the vaccine.”

To stay up to date please check the Welsh Government website at gov.wales.

Do you want to make housing better?

Tenant Pulse is the voice of tenants in Wales. It has been created by Tpas Cymru and is supported by Welsh Government.

Have your say by joining the thousands of tenants who have already registered. Visit www.tpas.cymru/about/tenant-pulse to share your views



Happy 100th Birthday

We recently wished our lovely resident Ken from Cwmbran a happy 100th birthday. We asked the South Wales Argus to pop along to his socially-distanced surprise celebrations at Tŷ George Lansbury and his picture was in the paper. Ken Beattie was born in Pill on 8th August in 1920.



He served as an RAF mechanic before, during and after the Second World War. He then spent 35 years at Girlings in Cwmbran. He was married to Mabel for 73 years and they had one daughter, Ann. Whenever we meet Ken, his zest for life is infectious. He told the Argus that the secret to his long life was probably 'good living'.

Cover stars

Public Health Wales asked us to work with our residents and a local school to create a piece of art for their annual report. Budding artists from Tŷ Cae Nant, St Mary's Court and pupils from Crownbridge School worked with local artist Marion Webber to create this wonderful piece of art (featured on our front cover).



To thank those involved we have sent them all their own canvas print of the finished piece. Edna from Newport (pictured on the right of the photo with the three ladies) said: "I can't wait to proudly display it in my home."

New homes

Our development team continues to work on their most ambitious programme of building new homes. For the first time we are building new affordable homes in all five of our local authority areas. Here is where we are on site now...

Powys	Brecon Law Courts, Brecon	21 homes
Monmouthshire	Brecon Road, Abergavenny	24 homes
	Hereford Road, Abergavenny	5 homes
	Garden City Way, Chepstow	8 Homes
Blaenau Gwent	Greenacres, Tredegar	22 homes
Torfaen	Blenheim School, Cwmbran	17 homes
	Llantarnam Road, Cwmbran	29 homes
Newport	Tredegar Court, Newport	47 homes
	James Street, Newport	8 homes



Be prepared – get your home winter ready

We know winter seems a long way off but it is a good idea to start preparing so you can catch any issues early and be prepared:

- 1 Check your boiler is working properly – if you haven't had your heating on all summer, switch it back on and make sure the heating comes on. If your boiler doesn't seem to be working, please contact us (full contact details are on page 13) and we can send someone out to you before the weather changes.
- 2 Check your radiators are all working – when you test your heating, check that your radiators are getting hot from top to bottom in every room. If there are any issues with them heating up, or you notice a leak – give us a call to arrange a repair. If any of your radiators aren't getting warm at the top, you just need to bleed the radiators. You can find out how to bleed a radiator by watching a video from Worcester Bosch on YouTube. Just search “How to Repressurise a Heating System with an Internal Filling Key”.



Search YouTube for “How to Repressurise a Heating System with an Internal Filling Key”

- 3 Check your gutters are clear – blocked drains and gutters can cause property damage when it starts raining heavily. Give us a call and we can arrange to send someone out to take a look.
- 4 Check your energy bills and consider switching energy suppliers. There's no disruption in service; all that happens is that your money goes to a different company when you pay your bill. There are lots of website that will search for the best deal including [Uswitch.com](https://www.uswitch.com). If you're struggling with energy bills and need some free energy advice and a home energy health check contact our energy team by email energyadvice@melinhomes.co.uk or text **07781 472210** or call **01495 745910**, quoting 'energy'.
- 5 Those chilly winter breezes can find their way through the nooks and crannies of your home. Why not get one of those funny draught excluders shaped like a snake or a dog?
- 6 And lastly, stay wrapped up and stock up on hot drinks and chocolate!

Competition time!

If you're aged between five and 12, you can help us spread the word on the dangers of carbon monoxide (CO), the silent killer.



All you have to do is create a poster, poem, piece of art, or a short video that is informative and accurate in warning of the dangers of carbon monoxide.

You can win some fantastic prizes for you and your school.

We will also use the winning pieces to help us promote to our residents the importance of having your annual gas boiler service.

Send your entries in by email to us at news@melinhomes.co.uk or in the post to:

'CO Competition'
Melin Homes
Ty'r Felin
Lower Mill Field
Pontypool
Torfaen NP4 0XJ

Please include your name, age, the school you go to, and your parent/guardian's name and contact number.

The competition is open to all children and you don't have to be a Melin resident. The closing date for entries is Friday 30th October.

We can't wait to see your entries!