



# Tai Calon

Community Housing

*at the heart of your community*



Annual Report 2010/11

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# The Chair and Chief Executive's Message

**We are delighted to present Tai Calon's first annual report reflecting the eight months since the transfer of the housing stock from Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council in July 2010.**

A significant amount of progress has been made. We have created a business from scratch which now employs 263 staff and has an annual income in excess of £17million. We have plans to deliver over £111million of improvements to homes and communities over the next five years.

The Board and Executive team have developed a range of

actions to ensure we achieve our vision to deliver excellent homes and services to make our communities proud. Throughout these actions runs the commitment to deliver the promises made to tenants on our behalf by Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council. We are delighted to report that although the actions form part of a five year plan a significant number of them have been completed already.

We are currently putting detailed plans in place for the next four years to ensure all our properties meet the Welsh Housing Quality Standard by 2015. Our new 'Planned Improvement Plan 2011-2015' booklet, has been mailed out to all tenants, so you will be able to see when your property is scheduled for work. Tenants have selected high quality fittings for the properties and have been involved in the selection of a number of contractors all of whom are committed to creating jobs and traineeships in Blaenau Gwent.

We have worked hard to build the foundations for our new organisation and ensure tenants are involved throughout. There is still much to do but ultimately

what we do is all about improving the homes and communities you live in and the services you receive. We have made mistakes as any new organisation is likely to do, however by ensuring we adopt a process of continuous improvement across the organisation, we will learn from these mistakes and improve our service offering to ensure it doesn't happen again.

Finally we would like to express our thanks and gratitude to the tenants who have worked so hard throughout this period to develop the improvement programme, and specify the products and contractors. We would like to pay tribute to the hard work of the voluntary Board members and staff whose enthusiasm, commitment and skills have resulted in the firm foundations set for Tai Calon and which will drive the organisation forward in the years ahead.



# Who we are...

## Our Mission

*To deliver our promises,  
improving homes and lives*

## Our Vision

*We will deliver excellent  
homes and services to make  
our communities proud*

## About us

- Tai Calon is a not for profit social landlord
- We have over 6,200 properties
- We have 263 staff
- We will be spending £111million over our first five years to bring our housing stock up to WHQS standard
- We want to make a positive difference in the communities in which we operate

## Our Values

We will:

- Be tenant focused
- Listen and learn
- Be excellent
- Show respect
- Be open



# Review of the first 8 months

We have had a very busy year getting the new organisation up and running and starting to deliver on the promises made to tenants through the offer document. We have made a great deal of progress but recognise there is still much to be done.

Over the next few pages we have provided additional information about Tai Calon together with some highlights from our first eight months.

## Types of homes



491

Flats



309

Sheltered



3,088

3 Bed Homes



797

Bungalows



1,454

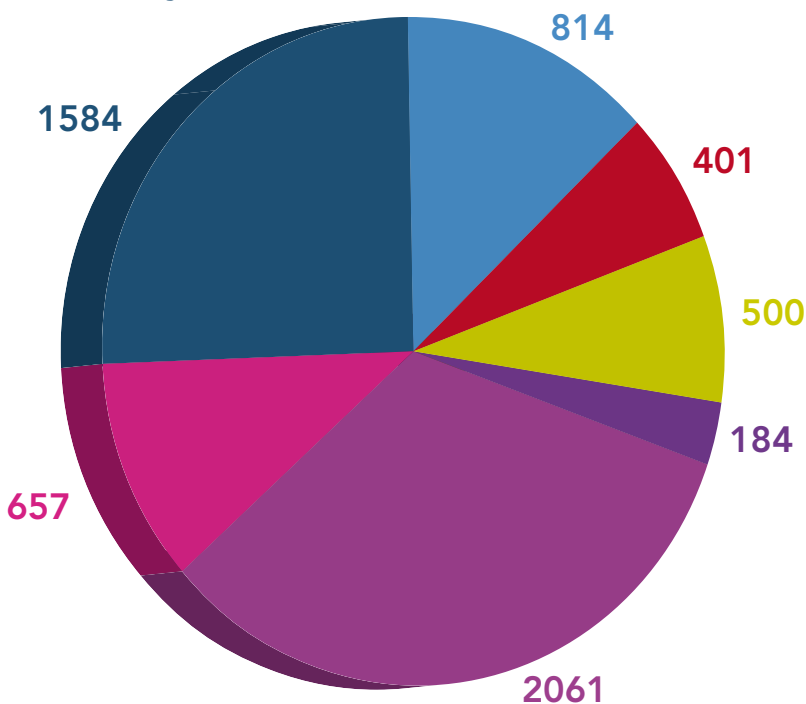
2 Bed Homes



62

4 Bed plus Homes

## Homes by area



Abertillery

Blaina

Brynmawr

Swffryd

Ebbw Vale

Nantyglo

Tredegar



To date we have let the following homes:



69

Flats



28

Bungalows



6

Sheltered



5

1 Bed Homes



67

2 Bed Homes



80

3 Bed Homes

Total **255**

## We also provide services to:

330 Leaseholders

1076 Garage tenants and

25 Commercial premises.

## Our average rents for 2010/2011 were

	Sheltered	Non-sheltered
1 Bed Flat/Bungalow	£54.17	£55.52
2 Bed House/Flat/Bungalow	£57.68	£58.14
3 Bed House/Flat/Bungalow		£59.06
4 Bed House		£57.68



# Welsh Housing Quality Standard (WHQS)

Tai Calon has committed to its tenants that all homes will reach the WHQS standard by 2015. The standard means we must ensure our homes are:

- In a good state of repair
- Safe and secure
- Adequately heated, fuel efficient and well insulated
- Contain up to date kitchens and bathrooms
- Well managed
- Located in attractive and safe environments
- As far as possible suit the specific requirements of the household

Tenants have been involved in all stages of the selection process both for the products and the contractors. At the open day to select kitchen suppliers, over 500 tenants came along to our offices to be involved in the selection process. As a result tenants have a choice of four different kitchens from two different suppliers and can also choose tiles and flooring from a selection. In bathrooms tenants may opt for a shower run from the heating system or an electric shower.

To date we have completed:



236 Kitchens



158 Bathrooms



75 Rewires



217 Roofs



396 Heating systems

Christine Morgan has lived in Waundeg, Tredegar for nine years and has already experienced the positive impact Tai Calon can make. Tai Calon's contractors have installed new kitchen, bathroom and heating system. Christine says *"I've always had problems with keeping the house warm. But the modernisation work has made a huge difference..."*



# Property Services

We employ over 120 tradesmen in the organisation and these include plumbers, carpenters, plasterers and electricians. They are responsible for completing your repairs and the statistics below measure the response performance.

		2010/11 Actual	2010/11 Target	2011/12 Target
Routine repairs completed on time	Emergency (within 24 hours)	96.84%	96%	97.5%
	Urgent	86.87%	95%	95%
	Non urgent	80.79%	95%	92%
Gas servicing completed on time		99.98%	100%	100%

An appointment service was introduced during the course of the year with 100% of appointments made being kept.

We are always interested to know what tenants feel about our services so that we can continue to improve them. Satisfaction levels with our repairs service are noted below.

	2010/11 Actual	2010/11 Target	2011/12 Target
Percentage of tenants rating the repair <b>service</b> as good or excellent	91.90%	97%	97%
Percentage of tenants rating the <b>quality</b> of the repair as good or excellent	89.98%	97%	97%





# Community Involvement

We have run a number of events across our estates involving tenants and their families. These have been about improving neighbourhoods.

## Planning for Sirhowy/Big Spring Clean Event

Tai Calon worked in partnership with Tredegar Communities First to arrange this event in Sirhowy, Tredegar. Tai Calon donated skips at the event, along with partner organisations including United Welsh Housing Association and Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council, to encourage residents to clean up their gardens by taking part in a 'rubbish amnesty'. Tai Calon officers also helped volunteers clean up the estate by carrying out litter picks.

There were also a number of fun and informative activities at the event, including paper pot planting workshops run by Greenerth@Tai Calon.

As well as the 'Big Spring Clean' event, Tai Calon carried out a 'planning for real' exercise with residents on the day, where people were asked to give their suggestions on how their neighbourhood could be improved. Tai Calon will use this information to develop a Neighbourhood Improvement Plan for Sirhowy.



## Career Aspiration Talk

Tai Calon officers held a 'career aspiration' talk with Year 6 pupils at Rhos-y-Fedwn Primary School in Rassau. The youngsters had lots of fun during the interactive sessions by trying their hand at tiling and being rewarded with Smarties 'for being smart' when identifying the different jobs available in the housing sector.

The event was organised by Rassau and Garnlydan Communities First and during the event youngsters benefited from talks from a number of local companies and employers such as the Police.





## Waunheulog DIG IT

Tai Calon worked with residents from Waunheulog, Nantyglo to carry out a 'green space makeover' on the estate. Funding was provided by BTCV (British Trust Conservation Volunteers) which helped young people from the estate plant hawthorn and hazel trees in the area. The local youth club, The Cheeky Dragons, gave their ideas on how the space could be improved, such as log seating and camping areas.

The project gave local volunteers the opportunity to gain qualifications in fencing, paving and use of hand tools which will support them in finding employment.



## Action Camp

Tai Calon sponsored thirteen young people from Blaenau Gwent on a three day 'Action Camp' event near Tenby. During 'Action Camp' the young people took part in a number of fun, educational activities such as 'bush tucker' trials, beach Olympics, cooking a meal on a fixed budget and team building exercises.

'Action Camp' is organised by Young Wales, a South Wales based social enterprise, whose focus is to engage with young people helping to build their confidence and improve their life skills.





## Construction Taster Sessions

Tai Calon worked with Construction Youth Trust, Young Wales and Bridges Into Work to provide young people from Gurnos and Bryn Farm Estates in Brynmawr with a six week taster course to learn new skills in carpentry, plumbing and tiling. The group used their new skills to make two benches which they donated to the residents at Riverside Sheltered Scheme in Blaina.

At the end of the course the youngsters were presented with a certificate to support them in applying for training or jobs, as well as a tool box for them to practise their new skills!



19 year old Jamie Griffiths attended the Construction Youth Trust training sessions. Things have been looking up for him since he took Tai Calon up on its offer of training. "I wasn't doing a lot" explains Mr Griffiths recalling how the association approached him and his friends to offer them places on the course. Following this course Jamie has gone on to complete his BTEC level one in Carpentry.

## The Big Spring Clean – Nantyglo

Tai Calon joined Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council in its annual 'Big Spring Clean' event in Nantyglo, as part of the Keep Wales Tidy 'Valleys Spring Clean Week'. Volunteers from the local community joined officers from Tai Calon, the Council, Communities First and Keep Wales Tidy to carry out litter picks in the area.

The clean-up was also televised on BBC1 and featured in the 'Taking on the litter louts' episode of its 'Week In Week Out' programme.







# Communities

## Anti-Social Behaviour

During our first eight months we have successfully requested and obtained three court injunctions excluding four people from some of our neighbourhoods, or parts of our estates, all with the power of arrest, to protect our tenants who have been subjected to harassment and intimidation. We are committed to addressing Anti Social

Behaviour issues in our neighbourhoods and when required, take firm action to both protect our residents and send a message that Tai Calon will not tolerate such behaviour. We have also used other remedies to solve neighbour disputes on a less formal basis as appropriate.



## Great Neighbourhood Walkabouts

Tenant led Great Neighbourhood walkabouts have been introduced to walk our estates identifying and addressing issues that are of concern to residents of that estate. The number of tenants attending the walkabout is not as high as we would wish and we would encourage more tenants to take part and have a greater say in the running of their estate. Sixty-three tenants have attended the Great Neighbourhood walks in the eight months since transfer.



## Sheltered Housing Schemes

We have looked at ways of effectively using our empty sheltered housing properties and have in partnership with Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council and with the agreement of the residents, used part of one scheme to provide temporary accommodation for single homeless people. This is helping the local authority meet its legal duty to address homelessness and secures the future of one of our sheltered schemes.

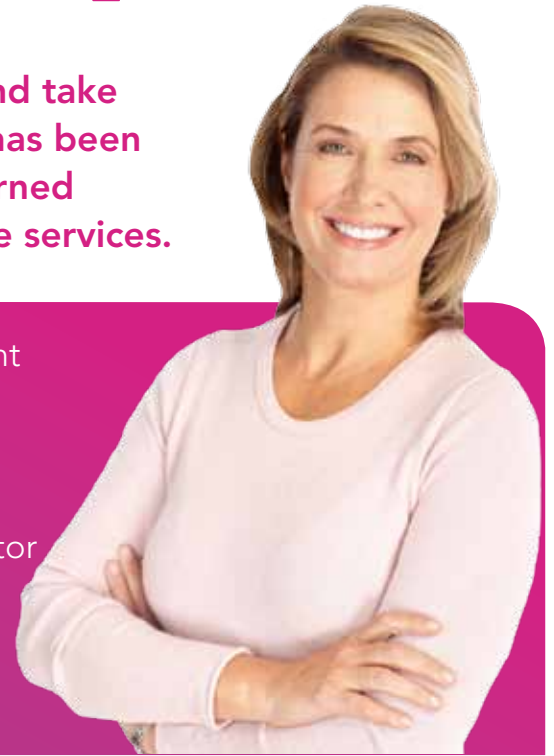
## Neighbourhood Initiatives

We have worked with a number of partners to speak to residents on our estates to identify problems that they are having and what they would wish to see on the estates. We then work with them to identify solutions to these issues. As part of this project we have also invited other agencies to attend activity weeks to give advice on issues including Domestic Violence, Debt Management, Financial Inclusion and Trading Standards.



# Compliments and Complaints

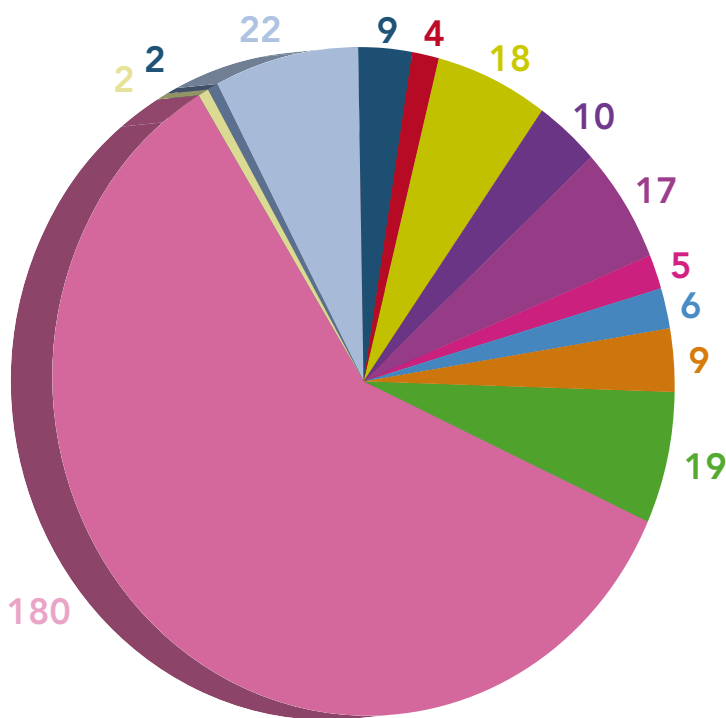
We are always pleased to receive compliments and take complaints very seriously. The complaints policy has been developed together with tenants and lessons learned from complaints are used to develop and improve services.



Mrs R from Brynmawr had some external improvement works done to her property. She was very happy with the work but there had been some minor damage to her property. Mrs R complained to Tai Calon who investigated her claim and arranged with the contractor to go back and repair the damage free of charge. A delighted Mrs R said "I am pleased that Tai Calon dealt with my complaint quickly and efficiently..."

**Number of Compliments 2010/11 71**

**Complaints by Service area**



- ▼ Anti-Social Behaviour
- ▼ Adaptations
- ▼ Allocations
- ▼ Customer Service
- ▼ Improvement work
- ▼ Income team
- ▼ Neighbourhoods
- ▼ Out of hours service
- ▼ Relets work
- ▼ Repairs
- ▼ Sheltered housing
- ▼ Street Lighting
- ▼ Technical

**Total Complaints 2010/11 303**



# The Board

The overall purpose of the Board is to direct and provide strategic direction for the organisation within a framework that has at its heart delivering excellent homes and services to make our communities proud. The Board has defined the mission, vision and values of the organisation and monitors progress against this and the objectives and targets it sets for the organisation.

The Board is made up of 15 members, 5 tenants, 5 independents and 5 council nominated members. It has the following governance structure (governance is the processes policies and rules affecting the way the organisation is administered and controlled):



A training and development plan is being developed for Board members to ensure they have the skills and knowledge to be able to undertake their roles effectively.

Tai Calon recognised that as a new organisation, we needed to ensure robust governance arrangements from the start and six months following transfer commissioned an organisation called the Governance Forum to undertake an assessment of our governance arrangements. The results were good for such a young organisation and they have provided a detailed action plan for further improvement.



# Your Board members are:

## Tenant Board Members



Margaret Retallick – Vice Chair



Elaine Townsend



Julia Gregg



Phillip White

## Independent Board Members



Philip Crozier – Chair



Fred Davies



Nigel Perring



Steve Porter



Andrew Bateson



## Council Nominated Board Members



John Williams



David Roche



Godfrey Thomas



Shirley Ford



Peter Abbott

## Co-optees



Bill Voyce



Phillip Hodgson



Keith Chaplin



# Partners

Tai Calon can only achieve its aims by working together with its tenants, staff and partnership organisations – partnership and collaboration are a way of life for the organisation. Partners include:

- Welsh Government



- BTCV



- Trowers & Hamlins



- UCATT



- Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council



- Young Wales



- Morgan Cole



- GMB



- Aneurin Bevan Health Board



- Care & Repair



- Hugh James



HUGH JAMES

- Bellevue Practice



- Genus Consortium, Contractors



- Go Wales



- Police



- Heads of the Valleys Partnership



- Valleys Regional Parks

Valleys Regional Park  
Parc Rhanbarthol y Cymoedd

- Communities First



- Fire Service

South Wales  
Fire and Rescue Service



Gwasanaeth Tân ac Achub  
De Cymru

- Insight for Organisations



- Smart Money Credit Union



- Haines Watt LLP



- Unison



- Communities 2.0



- Keep Wales Tidy



- Orbit Group Limited



- UNITE



Thanks to all of our partners – without their support we could not have achieved the successes we have.

# Staff

Tai Calon now employs 263 staff and has created 38 new permanent full time jobs, has taken on 5 apprentices and currently has 9 people in trainee roles.

We are committed to developing the skills of our staff so that we can deliver high quality services to our tenants and communities. To date we have organised 35 training courses.



## Staff Consultation

**Joint Consultative Committee  
(Union Meeting)**

Staff offer document  
Employee relations  
Employee requests for changes to terms and conditions  
Joint Executive/employee improvements  
Changes to policies, procedures, practices

**Staff Advisory Panel**

Business results and performance  
Ownership of Brightsparks (idea scheme)  
Hear and review staff concerns/interests  
Develop facilities/communications  
Develop best in class HR policies  
Develop social calendar





## Staff fundraising

Our staff has undertaken a number of charity events during the year raising over £1,700 for charities including:

- A number of staff took part in the charity sponsored walk for the In the Pink breast cancer charity and raised in excess of £900. A number of subsequent events mean we have raised over £1,100 so far for our chosen charity.
- One of our sheltered wardens raised £145 for the Hospice of the Valleys at the Blaina fun day.
- Staff raised £140 through baking and selling cakes and coffee for Macmillan Cancer Support.
- For Comic Relief and Red Nose Day, events included a pick a pose sweepstake, wear a wig to work day and soak a colleague challenge. The grand total of £311 was raised.







# Financial stuff

## Reading the accounts

### How to find some of the key figures

**The figures quoted in this report are extracted from the Statutory Accounts for Tai Calon Community Housing Limited.**

Figures without brackets show money coming into Tai Calon; those within brackets indicate money going out.

The first key figure is that for "income" at the top of the Income and Expenditure Account. This shows that Tai Calon received just under £12million in 2010-2011. More than £11.5m came from rents and service charges.

The "operating costs" figure shows that the services we provided to tenants cost a total of more than £10.5million. This figure includes items such as the cost of running our housing services, our repairs service, our offices and the salaries of 263 staff.

Tai Calon also received £2.8million in grants from the Welsh Assembly Government. These were secured as part of the agreement to transfer homes to Tai Calon from Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council to enable improvement works to go ahead.

After taking other income and expenditure into account, this left us with a 'surplus for the year' of £974,000 before taking into account our expenditure on Major Works (WHQS works).

The figure at the top of the Balance Sheet shows the positive effect of our refurbishment of tenants' homes through the Major Works programme. Although much of our Housing stock is old the value (shown under tangible assets: Housing properties) has increased by £3.8m. This value has been created by the work on tenants homes since transfer.

# Summary Financial Statements

## Income & Expenditure Account

	For the period ended 31 March 2011 £'000
Turnover	11,900
Operating costs	(10,529)
<b>Operating surplus</b>	<b>1,371</b>
Surplus on sale of fixed assets	305
Interest receivable	1
Interest payable and similar charges	(591)
Exceptional income / (expenditure)	(112)
<b>Surplus/(deficit) on ordinary activities</b>	<b>974</b>

## Balance Sheet

	For the period ended 31 March 2011 £'000
Housing assets	3,792
Other Fixed assets	1,599
<b>Current assets</b>	<b>2,717</b>
Current Liabilities	(7,141)
LGPS Pension Liability	(1,796)
	(829)
<b>Capital and reserves</b>	<b>(829)</b>





# Plans for next year

- Roll out the next stage of the WHQS major works programme to upgrade and replace kitchens, bathrooms, heating systems, electrical wiring and improve insulation, using a wide range of contractors.
- Develop the service offered by Green Earth @ Tai Calon to maintain and improve our estates.
- Develop our services and service offering to ensure all tenants of Tai Calon are financially included and not disadvantaged because of financial circumstance.
- Continue to look for opportunities to set up social enterprises and to create jobs and training opportunities in Blaenau Gwent.



If you would like this booklet on audio CD, in Braille, in large print, in an alternative language or in a format you can read on a PC please contact us.

Os hoffech gael y llyfryn hwn ar CD sain, mewn Braille, mewn print bras, mewn iaith arall neu ar fformat y gallwch ei ddarllen ar gyfrifiadur personol, cysylltwch â ni.

Jeśli chcesz broszury na CD audio, w alfabecie Braille'a, dużą czcionką, w innym języku lub w formacie można odczytać na komputerze prosimy o kontakt.



## Visit our offices or write to us at:

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[www.taicalon.org](http://www.taicalon.org)