

Tai Ceredigion Monitoring Group Annual Report 2017- 2018

The past year as with previous years has been a very busy one for the Group. I feel it would be prudent to extend my gratitude to the members past and present, who have worked so hard to ensure the tenants voice is not simply heard but in ensuring that tenants remain at the heart of Tai Ceredigion's operations. More importantly, the members donate their time freely without personal gain to themselves, thank you.

In September we were informed of the unexpected passing of Derek Lassiter, Chairman of the Tai Ceredigion voluntary board. This news was met with great sadness by the Group as Derek had been a staunch supporter of the group and tenant involvement at the highest level of the organisation's decision-making process. Derek held the group in high-esteem and valued us greatly as we did him. The group will miss him greatly and will be forever in his debt.

We would also like to extend our gratitude to Maureen Williams who has now left the group to join the Tai Ceredigion Sheltered Forum. In addition, we would also like to congratulate our member Ian Cox for producing a very comprehensive report on renewable and sustainable energy which he presented to Tai Ceredigion. Furthermore, we also commend Ian for obtaining the support of Tai Ceredigion for his next feasibility study into the association's use of electric vehicles, well done Ian!

The Group have attended more than 50 events, including our own meetings, telephone surveys, estate inspections, policy review meetings and WHQS verification inspections to name but a few. Members have also attended Welfare Reform Group meetings and met with officers and Board members at Board meetings, where we discussed self-evaluation and Tai Ceredigion's strategic objectives. Officers of the group have also attended Tai Ceredigion's Business Planning Day along with representatives from the Care Society at which we discussed future partnership working.

Also, during the year, the Group sent numerous submissions to Welsh Government on their proposed changes to Housing Regulations as well as attending various training and engagement events around Wales. We feel it is essential for the tenant's voice to be heard during these consultations and have come to understand that we are the only tenants group doing so. The Housing Regulator also engages with us directly to seek our views on Tai Ceredigion's annual performance before publishing their regulatory judgement.

We also made a submission on the Welsh Governments recent consultation regarding “Concessionary Travel Passes” in which we strongly indicated the need to protect provisions for rural areas, disabled and older people. We have also made submissions on various Ceredigion County Council consultations and achieved positive results. One such consultation was the recent “Waste Collection Consultation”, we are pleased to report our recommendation for “Assisted Waste Collection” was accepted and implemented by the council which provides residents who are disabled or possess a long-term health condition with further options to evidence their need for rubbish to be collected within the boundary of their property. The scope has now been widened from solely a GP letter to include, family members, health care professionals and support workers. We also have tenant representation on the Ceredigion Disability forum which is also proving beneficial to the wider community along with our tenants.

Early last year we recommended that Tai Ceredigion employ a disabled person to look at Equality and Diversity and the wider issues affecting disabled tenants. We are pleased to report our recommendations were accepted and are pleased to welcome Rhiannon Hicks Tai Ceredigion’s new Special Projects officer. We also recommended that the reception area at the Lampeter office be modified to improve access for disabled people and people with sensory loss. Again, our recommendations were adopted, and work is currently taking place to implement our recommended changes.

In August we attended our “Big Day Out” event which unlike previous years was solely hosted by Tai Ceredigion. There was a wealth of organisations present offering support and advice for our tenants and well over 150 of our tenants attended. It was a fun day with tenants attending in fancy dress outfits including myself. If you have not attended this event previously, please consider doing so especially as it is free for Tai Ceredigion tenants with lots of activities for children.

During the past year other tenant groups and housing associations have shown great interest in how TCMG operates. Other tenant groups are not involved with their housing associations to the level that we are, and they have been very keen to learn from us. We possess a very high level of autonomy whereas other tenant groups are directed by their housing association. We were invited to Pembrokeshire Housings “Big Day Out” where we gained a valuable insight as to how another landlord organised their event as well as winning most of their raffle prizes. We extended an invitation to Pembrokeshire Housing tenants to attend our Tenant Conference where they too won our main prize.

We held our annual Tenant's Conference last September with the theme being "Keeping Safe in the Community". We had presentations from Barclays Bank on online security, Ceredigion Trading Standards on cold-callers and scams, Mid Wales Fire Service on fire safety in the home as well as Tai Ceredigion staff to answer tenant questions. There was also a wealth of support organisations offering advice and support, Dyfed Powys Police and Ceredigion County Council's refuse collection team.

The Pembrokeshire tenants felt our conference was outstanding, informative and well attended by support organisations.

We also received invitations from other housing associations to attend their tenant meetings to discuss the work we do for Tai Ceredigion and to see how their groups operate. We are looking forward to further networking opportunities with tenant groups this year and the mutual exchange of good tenant participation practices.

As you may have seen in the local press at the end of January this year, it has been announced that Tai Ceredigion and Mid Wales housing associations will be exploring collaborative working opportunities. As a part of this process we will be engaging with tenant representatives from Mid Wales to demonstrate the importance of tenant involvement during the decision-making process. Through this process we hope to demonstrate to the wider social housing community the important role tenants can play in such processes when given the opportunity. We wish to extend our thanks to both Steve Jones (CEO Tai Ceredigion) and Shane Perkins (CEO Mid Wales Housing Association) for their recognition of tenant involvement and their faith in our capabilities.

The coming year is set to be a busy one for the Group with the implementation of the Renting Homes, Act Wales, performing our various duties, engaging with other tenant groups and so much more. We are always looking for new members whom wish to actively participate in the work we conduct. If you have a few hours a month and would like to get involved, please contact Sue Thomas at Tai Ceredigion on 0345 606 7654.

I feel it is essential to give praise where it's due, so it is important that I recognise the support we have received from Sue Thomas, Tai Ceredigion's Tenant Participation Advisor. Sue was involved from the very outset prior to and following the stock transfer.

She attends our meetings in an advisory capacity, organises all of our tenant events once we have decided on the themes and desired speakers and so much more. More importantly, Sue does not direct the group and respects our autonomy. We look forward to working with Sue over the coming year and we are very grateful for her support, thank you Sue.

Finally, Jim Scanlan our Chairman and former Vice-Chairman for the past nine years stood down from his role at our recent AGM. Thankfully, Jim has stayed on with the group and was elected as both our Vice-Chair and Treasurer. Jim has been involved with the group prior to stock transfer and continued his involvement since. He has been a strong leader of the group and instrumental in many of the achievements for us as tenants. Jim's knowledge and unwavering dedication to protect tenant interests was recognised by the Tenant Advisory Panel which advised Welsh Government and he was consequently extended an invitation to sit on the panel. Under Jim's leadership, the TCMG received recognition and praise from various Welsh Government Housing Minister's who have encouraged and welcomed the work of TCMG. From a personal perspective I have come to know him as a trusted mentor, advisor and good friend. His continued involvement with the group will assist me greatly as I settle into my new role. I am also pleased to announce that Mervyn Tucker was once again elected as our Secretary. Mervyn possesses a wealth of valuable knowledge in many areas and as with Jim, he will continue to play an instrumental role within the group in ensuring "Better Homes, Brighter Futures" for Tai Ceredigion tenants. I also wish to thank the members of the group for their hard work to date and I look forward to working closely with them over the coming year.

Paul Clasby,

Chairperson,

Tai Ceredigion Monitoring Group.

January 2018.