

# Linkup

SUMMER 2007

united  
welsh

LINKUP CIRCULATION 3,100

Don't  
miss the...

A newsletter for and by United Welsh tenants

...everything you ever wanted to know about

# United Welsh

joint exhibition and AGMs!

**A fun packed event for United Welsh tenants and voice4tenants members on just about everything!**

- **Information Zone including voice4tenants**
- **Maintenance/repairs for your home**
- **Tackling Anti-Social behaviour**
- **Alternative therapy**
- **Environment and recycling**
- **Quizzes and games**
- **Gardening tips**

**See pages 6 and 7 for the full story**

voice

V4t  
tenants

19th July  
Village  
Hotel  
Cardiff

From 12.30pm  
to 4.30pm



# Contents

## Pages 4 & 5

The Senior Management Team of United Welsh are on the road. Find out where and when. **Help is needed** to produce Linkup. Interested? Read about what that can mean.

## Pages 6 & 7 United Welsh and voice4tenants

**AGMs.** Same day, same place and more than just an AGM.



## Pages 8 & 9

**Community pages** - what's been happening and what's yet to come

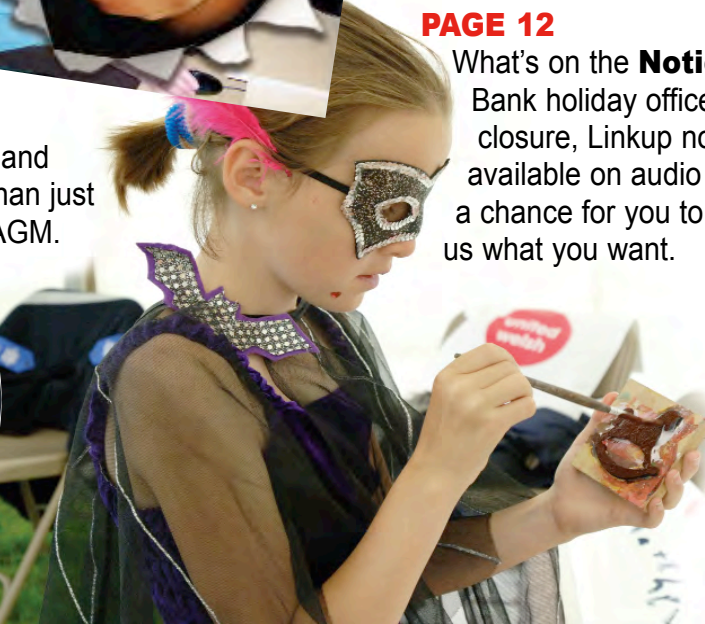
## PAGES 10 & 11

Energy conscious or not, we pass on some ideas to **save your use of energy, saving you money** and helping to save the planet at the same time plus **Ask Alf**. The second installment of our new gardening feature.

## PAGE 12

What's on the **Noticeboard?**

Bank holiday office closure, Linkup now available on audio and a chance for you to tell us what you want.



# Beware of companies offering you the 'Right to Buy'

**A United Welsh tenant was recently contacted by a company which offered to arrange for her to buy her United Welsh home. The company contacted the Association direct and were told that United Welsh tenants do not have the right to buy.**

End of story you might think?...

**NO!** Despite the fact that the company had been offering their services on a "no sale, no fee" basis, the tenant was recently given a bill for nearly £2,000!

Please beware of companies that offer to arrange for you to buy your home. United Welsh is a charitable organisation so their tenants do not have a right to buy the property they rent.

If you would like more information about this, please contact your Housing Officer.

# Don't feed the sharks!

**United Welsh is trying to improve the efficiency of the way the money available for repairs is spent. In the past, so much of the limited available money has been spent on day to day maintenance that planned maintenance has had to be reduced. This means that things like new windows and doors, kitchens and heating systems have had to be delayed.**

United Welsh is working now with the Welsh Assembly to bring all its properties up to a standard set by the Assembly so that all its tenants can live in comfortable, well kept, secure, energy efficient homes. They need the help of every tenant to do this successfully.

As tenants we have some responsibility for the upkeep of our homes and the environment where we live, keeping gardens tidy, cutting grass and clearing rubbish etc.

There are responsibilities for dealing with repairs properly as well, when repairs are needed they should be reported without delay but not as 'emergency' or 'urgent' – the Customer Services



**“ All we ask is that people act responsibly in looking after their homes to avoid the need for some repairs in the first place and in reporting repairs which are needed properly and without delay. ”**  
**Luke Mitchell,**  
**Area Housing Manager**

Advisors will classify all repairs and arrange contractors to attend.

Luke Mitchell, Area Housing Manager told us, “every year some of the repairs budget is tied up by jobs which could have been avoided all together or could have been carried out easily by most people.

That has an effect on the repairs service itself but also has a knock-on effect on the budget available for replacing things like kitchens, windows and heating systems.”

“All we ask is that people act responsibly in looking after their homes to avoid the need for some repairs in the first place and in reporting repairs which are needed properly and without delay.”

United Welsh will shortly be publishing a new leaflet giving more information about repairs and responsibilities and outlining the planned maintenance they would like to carry out over the next two years.

You can view the Planned Maintenance schedule at the “Everything you wanted to know about...” event at The Village Hotel on July 19th (see page 6 for more details).

# Focus on repairs



# No ifs...



# ...no buts...

**...it might have been a wet summer so far but who knows how long the rain will last? We all need to recycle more and rain water running into drains is wasted. If your water is delivered through a water meter it costs you money to water your garden using fresh water from the tap. Water butts save money and do their bit to save the environment and Wesh Water are offering their customers a chance to buy one at a special price!**

**In these days of heightened environmental awareness and encouragement from everyone from the government to the supermarket to recycle everything possible, why not consider collecting rainwater so that you can use it for jobs like watering the garden or washing down patios and paths.**

If your supply is delivered through a water meter, it can save you money and although at the time of writing (the end of June) it seems unlikely, you could even contribute to avoiding water shortages over the summer months.

At the moment, Welsh Water are offering their customers the chance to buy a water butt kit for £39.95. Ideal for collecting rainwater from the roof of your house, garage, greenhouse or shed, the kit contains a 190 litre Rainsaver water butt with a childsafe lid and stand and a rain diverter kit. If you are a Welsh Water customer you can find out more directly from Welsh Water by calling 0845 658 8866 for details.



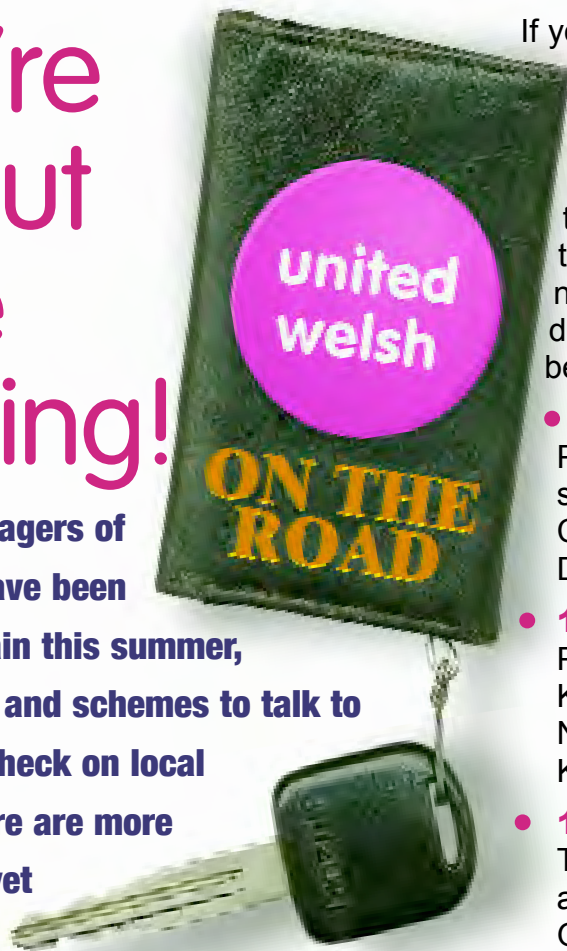
## Win a water butt in the Linkup re-cycling competition

**Linkup will be publishing the best ideas for re-using, recycling or protecting the environment. Send in your ideas and get a £10 prize. The best idea chosen by the editorial board for each edition will get a prize of £25 plus a choice of recycling equipment, including a Rainsaver water butt kit.**

# ...recycle water!

# They're still out there listening!

**The Senior Managers of United Welsh have been on the road again this summer, visiting estates and schemes to talk to residents and check on local conditions. There are more visits to come yet this year.**



If you see them near your home, please say hello. The dates of their visits are listed below, but if you would like to meet them to discuss a particular issue please contact United Welsh either by post, by phone through the freephone number or by e-mail through [tellmemore@uwha.co.uk](mailto:tellmemore@uwha.co.uk) with your name, address, phone number and brief details of your enquiry and an appointment will be arranged for you.

- **October 16th**

Paula Kennedy and Gareth Hexter will be at sites in Cardiff at Caerphilly Road, Ifor Jones Court, St Teilo's Court, Penylan Road, Almond Drive, Clos y ffynon and Clos y Celyn.

- **17th October**

Paula Kennedy and Richard Mann will visit Kennilworth Court, sites in Llandaff, Llandaff North and Whitchurch, Cefn Onn Court and Kenneth Treasure Court.

- **19th October**

To finish this round of visits, Paula Kennedy and Tony Whittaker will be at Dinas Powys, Grangetown and Butetown in the afternoon.

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## We need you...

**The front of LinkUp boasts of United Welsh tenants being involved in its production, but at the moment we're struggling to make that true. Linkup is normally produced by an editorial board of about eight people, a mixture of United Welsh tenants and staff.**

The board meets three times for each edition, often over lunch, to decide what articles should be included, agree what the edition will look like and make sure that the designer has interpreted the directions well, and at the final meeting, make sure everything is correct to print.

At present we have just one tenant at the editorial board meetings. You don't have to be a budding journalist – editorial board members are given opportunities to write some of the articles, but it isn't compulsory. If you would simply like to have fun helping to produce a good quality, informative and relevant newsletter, you'd be more than welcome to join.

If you are interested or would like to know more about it, please contact David Williams on 029 2085 8166 or at [dwilliams@uwha.co.uk](mailto:dwilliams@uwha.co.uk).



## ...and it doesn't end there!

**There are all sorts of ways tenants can get involved in producing information for tenants.**

United Welsh is keen to make sure that information sent out is easy to read and understand and in some cases has content which has been agreed between United Welsh and its tenants.

Most of this is carried out in partnership with voice4tenants. There is currently a group of tenants working with staff at United Welsh to develop a range of choices for ways in which people can get involved - giving opinions, taking part in activities within their own communities, being active in voice4tenants and joining the Tenant Inspector Service to name a few.

If you would like to know more about these opportunities look out for them in Linkup – they'll be featured over coming editions – or e-mail a request for more information to [tellmemore@uwha.co.uk](mailto:tellmemore@uwha.co.uk).



# Everything you want to know about Un

## A fun packed event for United Welsh tenants and

### Information Zone

There will be a section within the exhibition dedicated to information for tenants. Whatever questions or queries you may have, the answer will be found in the information zone.

### Owning your own home

Have you ever thought of owning your own home? At the 'Homes within Reach' exhibition you'll find out about the options available for becoming a home owner.

### Planned Maintenance

Find out what maintenance work is planned on the houses in your area. You'll be able to see planned



work for the next two years on projects such as replacement kitchens, bathrooms, doors, windows, and external decoration.

### voice4tenants

Meet the tenant members of the v4t Executive Committee and find out what the group is

currently involved in. Raise any issues you may have with the way United Welsh manages its tenancies. Your membership of v4t is how you can influence the way

United Welsh makes decisions which affect your home and how you live in it, how policy is set and how services are developed.

### Annual General Meetings

Attend both the United Welsh and v4t AGM's and find out more about the work that has been done over the past year and projects that are planned for the future. Use your vote at the v4t AGM to elect the Executive Committee who will be representing you for the next twelve months.



# Thursday, 19th J Village H

# wanted to know ited Welsh



voice4tenants members on just about everything!

## Competitions and Prizes

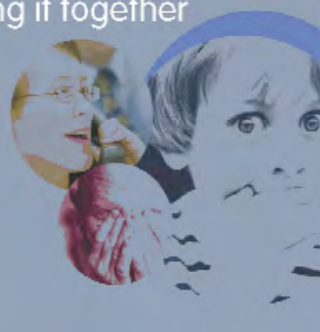
Enter the exhibition quiz with a chance to win a DVD player and many more great prizes.

Win a free DVD player and many other great prizes!!

## Anti-social Behaviour

Meet the members of staff that are working hard to ensure that our communities remain safe and free from anti-social behaviour.

Anti-Social Behaviour  
– Tackling it together



## Community Involvement

Visit project showcases for some of the active communities and talk to some of the people involved. Open up your imagination to the possibilities for your own community.

## Environmental Issues

Learn about ways to become more environmentally aware within the home and reduce your utility bills at the same time

## Alternative Therapy

Relax at the alternative therapy stand and let all your troubles fade away

... and much more!



**There will be plenty of United Welsh staff on hand to answer any questions you may have.**

We will also be joined by a number of our contractors such as Willis Construction, Westward and Quadron.

To book a place at the event please call:

**Tel: 029 2085 8118**

**or email: [djayne@uwha.co.uk](mailto:djayne@uwha.co.uk)**

If there is enough interest from a particular area we may be able to provide free transport. Places are limited so please ensure you book a place to avoid disappointment



July 12.30pm – 4.30pm  
Hotel, Cardiff

Buffet lunch included

# Community News

NEWS ROUND UP



**Saturday June 30th may not have felt like summer to many, but the end of the wettest June in living memory also saw the Van Communities annual Summer Fun Day in Caerphilly.**

The weather may have put the dampeners on some of the planned activities but everyone had as good a time as ever.

Thanks to the Partnership's planning team, to the volunteers staff of the Community Centre, to Jeff Cuthbert AM and to everyone who attended, the misery of the rain was kept on the outside and the day proved every bit as much fun as previous and more summery ones!



# And the summer fun isn't over yet!

## Dinas United Tenants' Association

**On Saturday 28th July at Caerleon Road, Dinas Powys, the Dinas United Tenants' Association will be holding their annual Summer Fun Day.**

Most of the activities are free and everyone is welcome. Enjoy a picnic with your favourite teddy bear, print a T-shirt (£2 charge), try drumming African style or get your face painted.

There's a water slide, coconut shy, a magician to entertain, childrens' games and a bouncy castle... and if it all gets too much for the grown ups, they can get some massage therapy!

The fun starts at 11.00 and goes on until 4.00pm.

## Windsor Quay

**On Friday August 3rd at Windsor Quay in Cardiff, the Grangetown Playcentre is running a Fun Day for children and young people aged between 5 and 14.**

Funded by Cymorth and supported by United Welsh, there'll be loads of great activities ranging from arts and crafts, a waterslide, street dancing, creating a mural to throwing wet sponges at play staff in stocks, to name just a few.

**For more details contact David Williams on 029 20 858166 or at [tellmemore@uwha.co.uk](mailto:tellmemore@uwha.co.uk).**



# Save energy - save money!

**Every year, your home could waste enough heat to fill up to 12 hot air balloons! You could help to save energy (and money) by following some simple ideas - your home could be warmer, you could be spending less on fuel and you'll have the satisfaction of knowing you're doing your bit for the environment. Here are some simple steps you can take that will save you energy and money:**

1. Improve insulation by drawing curtains in the evening to stop heat escaping and to reduce draughts.
2. Keep windows and internal doors closed to stop heat escaping from the room.
3. Avoid overheating your house - turning your central heating thermostat down by just 1°C could save you up to 10% on your energy bills.
4. To reduce the room temperature, turn the heating down rather than opening a window.
5. Avoid drying clothes on radiators - it lowers the room temperature and makes your boiler work harder.
6. Avoid covering radiators with curtains or furniture - it reduces their efficiency.
7. For safety and efficiency, get your boiler serviced every year. Remember that Carbon Monoxide is the 'silent killer' - make sure appliances are properly ventilated and that vents are not blocked. If you haven't had your boiler serviced for more than 12 months, contact United Welsh and ask them to arrange it.
8. Wash or dry full loads whenever possible or use the 'half load' setting on your washing machine.
9. Use the lowest recommended washing temperature.
10. Use a washing up bowl in the kitchen sink to cut down on the amount of hot water needed.

# The silent killer

**Carbon monoxide is a poisonous gas with no colour, taste or smell. Exposure to quite low levels can cause brain damage or even death.**

The symptoms of carbon monoxide poisoning are similar to those of flu and other viral infections. They include drowsiness, weakness, headaches, nausea and pains in the chest. If anyone in

your home has any of these symptoms while a gas appliance is being used you should stop using the appliance until it has been checked. You should also consult a doctor.

Carbon monoxide poisoning can affect the way the brain works, so you may not be able to tell that anything is wrong or take any action before it's too late for you or your family.

United Welsh will service your gas appliances for free every year. Make sure that you keep your appointment with the engineers when they come to call or if you get a card to say they called while you were out, make a new appointment straight away.

**Don't take the risk - get it checked.**





# ASK ALF

Old, tired plants can be given a new lease of life by taking cuttings. Alf, our resident gardener,

**LF** looks at how you can easily generate new,

vigorous plants for no more than a few pence and fill those spaces in your garden!

**You can grow plants for free! Do you have any tired -looking fuschias, marguerites, lavender, lavatera, etc., from last year?**

When the plants have new shoots which are about 2 inches long, cut the shoot off between two nodes (the bumpy bit on the stem) with a sharp knife, dip the bottom of stem into water, then into some rooting compound (around £1 a pot), then plant up to 30 cuttings in a pot. Firm the compost and water.

With a clear polythene bag make a small greenhouse for your cuttings by opening out the bag and placing the corner over your cuttings. Secure the bag by tying around the pot. Your plants won't need watering for some week.

After 2 – 3 weeks check to see if you have roots on your plants. When your plants have roots, transplant into pots (you can use the toilet roll cardboard recycling tip from the Spring edition of Linkup for this) or straight into the garden.



**Gardening clubs thrive all over the country, most of them from relatively humble beginnings.**

Why not team up with a friend and swap plants between each other so you both have more variety of plants, or form a club and swap with lots of friends and neighbours.

Don't forget to be responsible when you're looking for plants though, it's almost always bad for the environment if you use plants growing in the wild and they rarely transplant successfully into gardens anyway.

If you are starting a gardening club, even if there are only a few of you, you may qualify for some help from United Welsh. Contact the Community Services Team on 029 20 858126 or through [tellmemore@uwha.co.uk](mailto:tellmemore@uwha.co.uk) and you can easily find out what help they can give you.

Some Clubs have already benefited from grants for buying tools and seeds and even for starting their own newsletter.



## Summer gardening tip

**Got a garden pond or water feature? Does the water turn green in the summer?**

If so, here's an easy solution. Buy a bag of the large leaved watercress in a supermarket. Cut the watercress into 4" lengths and stand the stalks in a jar of water. Once you have roots developing at the bottom and all risk of frost has gone, float the new plants on the top of your pond. The watercress alters the nitrogen levels in the water and prevents algae from growing. At last, a solution!



# Noticeboard

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welsh

## Linkup now available on CD or audiotape!

Apologies to anyone who was looking forward to receiving the Spring Linkup on audio, because of technical difficulties we couldn't produce it. Happily though this Summer Linkup and all subsequent editions will be available for free.

If you or someone you know would benefit from receiving an audio version Linkup, please let us know by contacting David on 029 20 858166 or at [tellmemore@uwha.co.uk](mailto:tellmemore@uwha.co.uk).



## Is there something you want to know?

United Welsh collects a lot of information on how tenants feel about the services they provide, but because of limited space in the Linkup Supplement only the results on some services get reported regularly. If we gave you details of everything, Linkup would never fit through your letter box!

Do you want us to report on how tenants feel about a particular service provided by United Welsh? Would you like to know more about the services they provide? Contact the Editor on 0800 294 0195 or e-mail us at [tellmemore@uwha.co.uk](mailto:tellmemore@uwha.co.uk) and we'll make sure your ideas go to the Editorial Board to be discussed for Linkup in the future. Better still, why not visit the Editorial Board and take part in that discussion?

## Contact United Welsh for free!

You can now phone United Welsh and it won't cost you a penny! From reporting repairs to commenting on Linkup, use the freephone number:

**0800 294 0195**

## OFFICE CLOSURE

The offices at Ty Cennydd and Walters Building will be closed on **Monday 27th August** for the Late Summer Holiday

If you need an emergency repair when the offices are closed, please contact the Emergency Repair Line at the number below.

**(01495) 769624**

Remember – this service is for emergencies only!



## WINNERS OF THE REPAIR REPORT SLIPS DRAWS

**FIRST NAME DRAWN WINS £50,  
SECOND NAME WINS £25  
AND THIRD WINS £10.**

April winners

£50 - Mrs A A Thompson, Tredegar

£25 - Mr J Morgan, Blackwood

£10 - Mr J R Gilbert, Ebbw Vale