

2018/19 Report to Members



Chair's Message

Dear members,

Welcome to our Report to Members 2018/19.

We have continued to work hard over the past year on behalf of members, and we will be sharing some of the highlights with you in this report. Back in 2016 we developed 'Yfory' our plan for the next three years. As Yfory comes towards a close, we are delighted with the progress that has been made over our first three years as a Mutual. You can read more about what's been achieved over the past year in our Annual Report. We will be working with our members to set our new plan and this will be launched in the autumn.

Your Democratic Body has continued to work in the best interests of its members to ensure Merthyr Valleys Homes reflects the visions and values in its pathway to the future. This last year has been about looking back on what we

said we would do, as we set out in 'Yfory' and if it has worked. We have been pleased with what has been achieved, and recognise that there is still work to do in some areas. We will be carrying some of this forward onto the next stages of our Mutual.

We are ensuring that we are keeping up to date with all the external factors that affect us whilst continuing to grow with our strong values with the aim of being the best landlord and employer. We are taking all what we have learned and putting that along with our members feedback into the next 3 year vision. We want to continue to work hard at being a great landlord and employer that proves it true to co-operative working to strive for the best for our communities.



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Natalie" followed by a stylized flourish.

Natalie Warner
Chair of Democratic Body

Introduction

Welcome to your third 'Report to Members' – your report from us, the Democratic Body.

Inside you will find an account of our activities during the last financial year (April 2018 – March 2019) - what we have achieved and the decisions that we have influenced and made on behalf of the members of Merthyr Valleys Homes. By working together we are stronger, and this report demonstrates what can happen when members 'have a say'.

It has been three years since Merthyr Valleys Homes became Wales' first tenant and employee owned mutual housing association. Our mutual is owned by our tenant and employee members, and these members are at the heart of the decision making. The Democratic Body are here to act on your interests, and the wider interests of our communities in Merthyr Tydfil, and we represent you.

The Democratic Body has a number of key roles and responsibilities:

- Key Functions**
- To appoint (and remove) Non-Executive Directors to the Board of MVH
 - To approve the appointment (by the Board) of the Chief Executive
 - To work with the Board and the Chief Executive to ensure the good governance of the mutual
 - To work with the Board and the Chief Executive in developing the mutuals' business plan, including setting the strategic direction and approving the policy framework
 - To approve the programme of internal audit and to monitor the performance of the organisation
 - To set a Membership Strategy and to monitor its progress



Meet the Democratic Body

The Democratic Body is made up of eleven elected tenant representatives (elected by tenant members); eight elected employee representatives (elected by employee members) and two nominated Local Authority representatives (one Officer and one Councillor).

Here you can find out a little bit more about each of us:



Natalie Warner
Chair (Employee Representative)

Natalie started her career in MVH working in the ICT department, before joining the Engagement & Ownership Team in 2016 as Digital Communications Officer. Natalie has been on the Democratic Body since 2016, serving as Vice Chair for almost two years before becoming Chair in 2018.

Natalie lives in Merthyr Tydfil with her family. She is very proud to have lived in Merthyr all her life. She is community orientated, and is keen to develop services for tenants and residents alike across the borough, believing that having projects or centres that bring people together is vital for our tenants and the wider community. Natalie has previously undertaken lots of volunteering work, and has worked in one of Merthyr's largest youth clubs, Forsythia Youth Club, after attending herself as a young person and seeing the benefits of this provision first hand.

Natalie has enjoyed seeing the progress that the Democratic Body has made, and how it has grown in strength. Natalie feels that she has grown in confidence too and has learnt and grown to be able to chair the body with the help and support of the other representatives.



Nigel Phillips-Gunter
Vice Chair (Tenant Representative)

Nigel was brought up and educated in Merthyr Tydfil, and originally graduated with a B.Ed. (Hons) in Cardiff. Later in his career, Nigel re-trained as a Business Analyst. Being involved on the Democratic Body and other forums and groups has allowed Nigel to gain a wide variety of skill sets, and he takes great pride working for the betterment of tenants and employees alike.

In his "free" time, Nigel sings with the choir at St David's Church Choir in Merthyr, is a member of the Pastoral Chaplaincy Team, PCC Secretary and Deanery and Diocesan representative.

Tenant Representatives



Frances Bevan

Fran has been involved with Merthyr Valleys Homes since its inception in 2009. She served as the Chair of the Democratic Body for almost two years, after serving as its Vice Chair, and prior to this appointment, Fran served on the Board for a number of years as a Tenant Board Member, and Vice Chair. Fran regularly speaks on tenant related issues within the sector and has a passion for spreading the word about the importance of tenant and staff involvement.

Frances' background is in general and psychiatric nursing, both in the NHS and private sector. Frances lives in Trefechan, and enjoys spending time with her daughter and two grandchildren. In her spare time she enjoys watching her grandson play rugby and is also a very big fan of musical theatre.



Gaynor Bradley

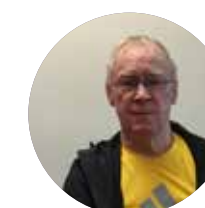
Gaynor is mother to 4 boys and is a Director on the board of a local charity. Gaynor volunteers in the community and has a keen interest in drama and theatre production. Gaynor returned to college and completed a BTEC diploma in business and internet systems. In her spare time she makes bespoke celebration cakes and greeting cards.



Marlene Burns

Born and bred in Merthyr Tydfil Marlene has worked in the town in a variety of jobs including the NHS. After Marlene retired she took up a number of voluntary positions with charities including Merthyr Tydfil Credit Union, of which she was a founding member.

Marlene has been a Tenant Board Member for both Merthyr Tydfil Housing Association and Merthyr Valleys Homes. Marlene brings a wealth of housing experience with her onto the Democratic Body, and enjoys the level of influence that members have.



Vivian Evans

Vivian lives in the lower end of the borough in Quakers Yard, and has been a tenant of MVH for ten years.

Although Vivian is a newer member of the Democratic Body, joining in September 2017, he can already see that talking things through with the ability for all representatives to have their say is a great way to solve problems and come up with new ideas.



Paul Franklin

Paul has been a tenant of MVH since its inception in 2009. Paul has extensive experience of working in the public sector, including with Birmingham City Council and Coleg y Cymoedd, as Senior Finance Officer. Paul has previous experience of sitting on a Tenants Association when he lived in Birmingham, and hopes to draw on his experiences when making decisions on matters on behalf of members.

Paul is now semi-retired and wants to give something back to the community by representing fellow tenant members on the Democratic Body.

Meet the Democratic Body



Annette Longbottom

Annette is originally from Romsgate in Kent, but has been a tenant of MVH for over eight years and loves living in Merthyr Tydfil. The

issues that are most important to Annette are the building of new homes, whilst also looking after the maintenance of existing homes. Also having a real sense of community is something close to Annette's heart. Serving on the Democratic Body is Annette's way of giving something back to the organisation and the community and Annette enjoys playing a real part in making the decisions that affect tenants.

Annette has six children and 14 grandchildren.



Joan Marshall

Joan was born in Merthyr and attended Troedyrhiw Secondary Modern School. Joan moved away from Merthyr, got married and had

3 children. She returned to Merthyr Tydfil in 2014. Joan has a Social Policy Hons Degree, specializing in deviance alongside community & urban development, followed by a PGCE in further education. Joan's paid and voluntary work has never been far from public sector concerns and in her leisure time she enjoys creative activities.



Tracey Powell

Tracey is a housewife and mother with 5 children. She is originally from Swansea, but has been living in Merthyr Tydfil since 1991. Tracey is an

active participant at a local school for over 20 years, previously being a parent governor and PTA member.

Tracey has been an active tenant representative for over nine years, sitting on several forums and panels, and served as a Tenant Board Member for several years. Tracey has been a representative on the Democratic Body since 2016, and was pleased to have been voted back on in the 2017 elections. Tracey's role is all about representing tenants and having a real say in what matters for them.



Olga Thomas

Olga lives in Georgetown, Merthyr Tydfil with her husband, and has resided there since 2014.

In addition to the Democratic Body, Olga gives a lot of her spare time to MVH serving on our Residents Participation Forum and Grants Panel. Olga is also a voluntary member of the Georgetown Foodbank.

Employee Representatives



Alex Bartlett

Alex moved to Merthyr Tydfil from his hometown of Milford Haven in 2016, to come and work in Merthyr Valleys Homes as an Infrastructure

Support & Development Officer. Alex has recently changed roles within the organization to Performance Officer. Alex was keen to join the Democratic Body to make his contribution towards improving our mutual and the services we provide to our communities.

Alex has vast experience in volunteering roles, offering his ICT and administration skills, and was the Secretary of the local branch of the Royal British Legion. Alex currently resides in Taf Fechan Housing Co-operative, the first housing scheme of its kind in Merthyr Tydfil.



Kirsty Beattie

Kirsty is the Universal Credit Lead Officer for the Income Team at MVH and has worked in MVH for over six years.

Kirsty always has the tenants' best interests at heart and working on the front line visiting tenants regularly equips Kirsty with a good understanding of what our tenants need. Universal Credit is one of the biggest changes to affect and impact MVH in recent years, and Kirsty is able to bring her knowledge and experiences to the Democratic Body to help influence change that supports our tenants.

Kirsty lives in Aberdare and outside of work enjoys camping and walking mountains, her favourite being Snowdon.



Kristian Cole

Kristian works in the ICT department at MVH, and has worked here for eight years. The last three years have been spent developing

a bespoke Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system (the replacement housing system for MVH). Developing CRM has given Kris an overarching knowledge of most of the processes and workings behind the Housing, Allocations, ASB, Customer Services, Supported Services and Income teams, and therefore Kris has knowledge of the business as a whole.

Kris lives in Hirwaun with his wife and three children.



Mark Davies

Mark's role on our Environmental and Grounds Maintenance Team provides him with a good understanding of what's

happening in our local communities, and what is relevant to tenants. Mark feels very strongly about employees and tenants using their rights as members to effect change in the organization.

Mark has used the skills he has learned during his career (including his retail management and self-employment skills) to set up a successful voluntary community group in his local village.

Meet the Democratic Body



Julie McCarthy

Julie is currently employed as the Community Wellbeing Team Leader, overseeing the Community Living and Community Development

Teams along with the Floating Support Service (which includes temporary housing and homelessness).

Julie has worked within the housing field for more than eighteen years and has gained valuable experience working within a variety of housing settings. Julie holds a BSc in Housing Policy and Practice and has continuously undertaken a variety of training and development in order to keep up to date with legislative and policy changes. Julie has lived and worked within Merthyr Tydfil all of her life, and has an excellent insight, knowledge and understanding of local communities.

Julie has two daughters, and two granddaughters.



Ceri Price

Ceri is a Tenant Liaison Officer within the Homes and Property Team. Ceri has been with the organisation since transfer in 2009, and prior to that was

employed by Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council and has over 13 years experience working in the housing sector. Ceri enjoys being on the Democratic Body and feels that it is really important for both tenants and employees to have the opportunity to be able to feed in and influence the decisions that are made.

Ceri was brought up and educated in Merthyr Tydfil. Outside of work Ceri has a busy life, she has she has four children - a 13 year old daughter and 10 year old triplets (two boys and a girl). Ceri enjoys holidays, socialising and keeping fit and has also been involved in several charity fundraising events across Merthyr. Ceri currently lives with her children in Heolgerrig, Merthyr Tydfil.



Stephen Puddy

Stephen has worked in Merthyr Valleys Homes since its inception in 2009, and transferred from the Local Authority. He is currently

employed as the Procurement Manager for Merthyr Valleys Homes and is a member of the Chartered Institute of Purchasing and Supply (MCIPS). Stephen sits on a number of external procurement advisory bodies, Procurement for Housing, the Welsh Procurement Alliance and Consortium Procurement.

Stephen is also a member of the Audit Committee and the Complaints Panel, and these roles allow him to better understand the risks and financial complexities associated with running a busy housing association, whilst appreciating the hard work our organisation does to ensure that tenants are at the heart of what we do. Stephen also sits on the organisation's Equality & Diversity Panel.

Stephen was raised and educated in Merthyr Tydfil, and currently resides in Cardiff. He finds it very rewarding to work with tenants and employees on the Democratic Body, and observing first hand how they can have a real say in the way they would like to see the organisation heading.

Local Authority Representatives

Officer Position
Vacant



Cllr Jeremy Davies

Jeremy was elected as a Local Councillor in the Gurnos Ward in 2018. Jeremy was born and bred in Merthyr Tydfil, and currently resides in the Gurnos.

Jeremy is very active in the community, and is involved in The Men's Project – a scheme set up in 2015 to give a group of long-term unemployed men in the Gurnos the opportunity to get together and take part in a range of activities to help improve the community and develop their own skills and learning. Jeremy is also the Chair of the Gurnos Community Zone Implementation Group.



Resignations in 2018/19

Kim Ford	Tenant Representative
Cllr Chris Davies	Local Authority Representative
Julian Pike	Local Authority Representative
Paula Hamer	Tenant Representative

September 2018
October 2018
November 2018
February 2019

Our Key Activities

Key Appointments Chief Executive

Back in the Autumn 2018 we helped to design a recruitment process for the vacancy for a new Chief Executive. Being a mutual, we wanted a process that was as inclusive as possible, a way in which our members could play a part in the decision-making and have influence over who was appointed to the position. The Board and Democratic Body formed a sub-group, and we designed a process to suit our mutual.

The group decided to have two equally weighted interviews – a technical interview (to ensure that the candidates had the right skills, knowledge and expertise) and a values-based interview (to ensure that the candidates had the right values and beliefs in line with our mutual). The interviews took up 80% of the final score, and the last 20% was based on all of our members being invited to view and score a short recorded presentation by each of the final 4 candidates. We wanted to ensure that our members had a real say, and that their vote would really count.

We were pleased that over 120 members took the time to engage in this process – we can honestly say that our members voting for who they want to lead our mutual was a truly democratic process. We had excellent feedback from the members who were involved, with a request for more influence over key appointments in the future. As a result we have now committed that our Democratic Body will get involved with all senior appointments within MVH – including Heads of Service, Directors and the Chief Executive.

We are pleased to announce that Michelle Reid joined us as our Chief Executive on 1st April 2019. Michelle joins MVH with a wealth of knowledge and experience in housing and its supported services. Although we look forward to the next chapter of our journey with Michelle as our Chief Executive, we want to thank Mike Owen for his dedication, vision and support in developing our mutual and our communities for the better. We were delighted to see Mike receive the 'Outstanding Contribution to Housing' award at the CIH Welsh Housing Awards in November 2018 – this was thoroughly deserved! We wish Mike the very best for his retirement.



Non-Executive Directors

During the past year we have appointed two Non-Executive Directors to the Board, both sought through open advertisement. When interviewing candidates, as well as ensuring that they have the right skills and expertise, the panel ensure that they have the right values and beliefs that fit with our mutual. The successful candidates, Chris Bolton and Calvin Jones, were recommended to the Board for appointment, and joined the Board in March 2019.

Chris Bolton

Chris is the Good Practice Exchange Manager at the Wales Audit Office (WAO), and is responsible for the development and implementation of the Wales Audit Office approach to sharing good practice across public services. In 2018 Chris was awarded a Winston Churchill Travelling Fellowship to study large scale cooperatives in the Basque Country (NE Spain) and New England (USA). Chris truly believes that the future of Wales lies in economic activity that is rooted in, and democratically controlled by its communities, cooperatives and mutuals.

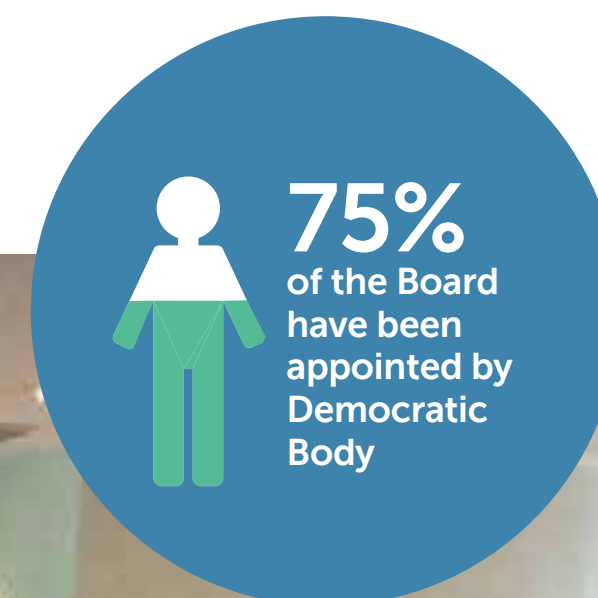
Chris was born in Nelson, and has been connected with Merthyr Tydfil all of his life.

Calvin Jones

Calvin Jones is a Professor of Economics and Deputy Dean at Cardiff Business School, Cardiff University where he helms the School's unique Public Value strategy. Calvin has been employed at the University since 1998 and holds a PhD in the Economics of Tourism and Major Sports Events. Calvin specialises in the analysis of the Welsh economy, and his interest in the Valleys means that he has an excellent contextual knowledge of how Wales 'works' and the particular issues that drive or hinder success in Valleys communities.

Calvin is a failed rock star and novelist – in 2012 he authored the black comedy short 'A Million Years of Sunshine'.

To date, since we became a mutual in 2016, the Democratic Body has appointed 6 of the 8 Non-Executive Directors on the Board. These appointments have been successful, and by having the majority (75%) of the Board appointed by the Democratic Body, this encourages accountability back to the tenants and employees that appointed them. Our co-operative values are being put into practice by the Board, and this is observed at each meeting by our Chair. The decisions being made and the collaborative working between the Board and the Democratic Body are testament to this way of working.



Yfory – our plan for the future

Back in 2016, we worked on a new vision for Merthyr Valleys Homes – ‘Yfory’ (‘Tomorrow’ in English). Yfory sets out how we want to shape our future together to make it a better place. It is a brave, aspirational document, with lots of goals and objectives, but one we feel is achievable, building on the good work that MVH has done over the past few years.

The Democratic Body has the powers to hold the Board to account. Even though we were confident that the Board will deliver against the objectives in Yfory, we have continued to monitor the organisation’s performance and progress against the ‘Annual Plan’ objectives and performance targets. We undertook a full review of the areas where objectives haven’t

been fully met, and looked at areas that are of particular interest to us and the members we represent, including repairs and maintenance; empty properties; rent and income and housing management.

As we are almost at the end of ‘Yfory’, we are already starting to think about how we will set the new plan for the next three years, and have committed to asking our members to join us in a series of focus groups and surveys to make sure that we are listening to our members when deciding what our priorities should be for the future. We should never assume, and always ask! The next plan will be discussed at our Annual Members’ Meeting in September 2019.

Governance

We did a lot of work to set up our new structure in 2016/17, so almost three years on, we have taken the opportunity to take a step back and to review how we are performing and representing our members. We started off with a survey at the beginning of the year to identify how we are working, and to identify any areas for improvement. We have put some changes into practice to make our meetings more efficient and effective. We have also undertaken a series of reviews to identify how we are performing as individuals, and as a body. The outcome of this is a training and development plan that is being implemented in 2019/20.

The role of internal audit is to review our arrangements for managing governance and risks, and to ensure that our internal policies

and processes are operating effectively. These reviews help to protect our mutual, as they are an independent review of whether we are complying with the law and best practice, and providing good services. We checked the audit reports from the last financial year (2018/19), and set the plan for the year ahead, making sure that all of the key risks are being covered. We also have representatives on Audit Committee, who alongside representatives from the Board, are responsible for reviewing and monitoring audit and risk.

We took the opportunity to have a review on the progress that we have made against our Membership Strategy – although the findings were positive, this has given us some things to think about when we set our new strategy next year.



Rent Setting

Last year we worked with the Board on developing a new approach to rent setting – one based on fairness and affordability. It is important for us to get the rent levels right so we can continue to provide services, and we implemented a new, affordable rent policy which we called 'Living Rent'. We used our model to set our rents at 28% of the average wage in Merthyr Tydfil. We tested this financially against actual household incomes and we can assure our members that this is working.

The Welsh Government set the policy for rents in Wales for social landlords like MVH and for Local Authorities. The purpose of this is to reduce variances in rents. We were rather disappointed with the Rent Settlement that we received in December 2018 as the settlement guidance from Welsh Government posed a risk to our 'Living Rents' policy and to our budgets. Therefore in January 2019 we decided to write to the Welsh Government to appeal this and to ask for an exemption so we could continue to set reasonable and affordable rents for our tenants.

We are really please to tell you that we were granted a 'dispensation' (a special consideration) to allow us to achieve a fairer distribution of rents for our tenants. We also



put forward a case study on our fair rent setting practice to influence a national review (the Affordable Housing Review) due out in Summer 2019. Not only are we influencing decisions within MVH, we are using our influence on national policy too.

Value for Money

Achieving 'Value for Money' is an area that we are passionate about and we are leading on this on behalf of our members. Last year we set a strategy 'Yfory Cryf' and this year we have been working through the action plan.

We wanted to find a way to share how we are performing with our members, so members could see for themselves that we are achieving our goals. We developed a 'Balanced Scorecard', an 'at a glance' document showing our performance in a number of key areas, and comparing against previous years. We want to be totally open and transparent with our members and this shows whether we are improving along with a brief explanation. You can find this on p. 23 of our 'Value for Money Statement' – we encourage you to take a look.

Following on from a number of focus groups held with our members from across the Borough in February 2018, we developed a new set of 'Golden Rules' to follow when it come to Value for Money. These rules are based on what our members felt was most important and what they wanted to hear about:

This piece of work demonstrates the importance of our members having a say – we engaged with members to find out what things are most valued. We want to continue sharing this information so everyone can see how we are achieving Value for Money.

We have also been doing a piece of work around 'social value' – the things that are valued as being important from the perspective of those affected by Merthyr Valleys Homes' work. So we have been out and about speaking to tenants to talk about this. We will be following on from this initial piece of work in 2019/20 and will share our findings with you soon.

Golden Rules

Keeping tenants safe



health and safety; tackling anti-social behaviour; creating defensible spaces

Protecting the environment



recycling activities; tackling fly-tipping; energy efficiency measures for tenants; communal gardens and green projects

Reviewing our main contracts every 3 years.



Treating staff and tenants fairly and equitably



equality impact assessments on policies; gender pay gap; equality and diversity activities.

Investing in the local economy



using local contractors, social enterprises and businesses.

Setting an affordable rent



balancing what the tenant can afford to pay with MVH's requirements.

Growing on our own/succession planning



training for employees to develop their skills; work placements; apprenticeships and improving employability.

Budget Setting

Each year the Board needs to approve a budget in line with the organisation's business plan. This year we participated in a 'Star Chamber' session (a panel consisting of the Executive Management Team, Democratic Body representatives and Board) to scrutinise any increases or savings (over £3,000) in departmental budgets, and we also looked at the Capital Programme budget. Setting the budget is no easy task, but we were able to ask questions and influenced the budgets that were set.

Equality & Diversity

We have worked with the Equality & Diversity Group this year in assisting them with their QED Award project. Achieving the Tai Pawb's QED (Quality in Equality and Diversity) award would demonstrate how important equality and diversity is to us and would recognize our on-going commitment. Three of our representatives sit on the panel, and we have supported the group to progress through the two stages of the award, which included an in-depth assessment of our equality and diversity practices and performance. We are hoping to achieve this award in May, and are confident that we will have a successful result.

Members' Involvement

Our Grants Panel (made up of tenant and employee members) awarded over £30,000 in grants to assist community groups in the provision of activities, projects and services within Merthyr Tydfil.





Members' Charity

Our Members' Charity of the Year in 2018/19 was The Alzheimers Society Cymru. We worked in partnership with this charity during the year, and held various fundraising events, from holding lunchtime quizzes, sweepstakes, cupcake sales and organized a sponsored walk from Aberfan to Merthyr Tydfil. The local Alzheimer's Choir performed at our Annual Members' Meeting in September 2018, and as well as entertaining us together we raised funds and awareness. We are pleased that lots of members got involved during the year!

We smashed our target of £2,000 – we raised an amazing £4,700. An incredible effort went into achieving this amount – well done to all involved!

Cheryl George, Community Fundraiser for Alzheimer's Society Cymru said:

"We want to make sure that no one faces dementia alone and to ensure this we have developed a new innovative 'Dementia Connect' service which will make sure people get the right support, in the right way. The incredible £4,700 raised by members at

Merthyr Valleys Homes means that our expert Dementia Advisers and trained volunteers will be there to provide relevant information and advice by phone or face-to-face, helping people with dementia in the area take back control of their lives and be more independent for longer."

We will continue to work in partnership with Alzheimers Society Cymru.



We raised a total of £4,700

In March 2019, Members voted for the 2019/20 Charity of the Year – Cancer Aid Merthyr Tydfil. We look forward to working with this charity over the coming year.



Progress against the Membership Strategy

In September 2016, we developed a Membership Strategy to support our development as a mutual. The Strategy sets out our aims to build an engaged, diverse and representative membership. It outlines how we will progressively build membership, and how we will ensure that we effectively communicate and engage with members so that they can play an active role in the organisation.

We are responsible for monitoring progress against the Strategy – here is the update for 2018/19. We will be setting a new Membership Strategy in 2019/20.






Aim #1

To grow and maintain membership numbers to ensure that Merthyr Valleys Homes is a truly member owned organisation and to achieve a 10% annual growth target year on year for the first three years. To ensure that membership is representative of the communities the organisation serves.

Objective	Comments	Have we complied?
1. To meet the annual target of a 10% increase in membership year on year, for 3 years	We have increased our membership by a further 13% during 2018/19.	😊
2. To take steps to ensure the membership reflects the diversity of the communities that Merthyr Valleys Homes serves	We currently have a fairly good balance against the factors that we have been measuring, but we have some areas of under-representation and have a plan to improve this.	😞
3. To develop a simple and accessible process for becoming a member	Our application form is simple and easy to complete – and is available online and in hard copy	😊
4. To maintain an accurate membership database which meets statutory requirements and aids membership development	We keep a Membership Register (statutory requirement) and membership database	😊




Aim #2

To communicate effectively with members, potential members and other stakeholders

Objective	Comments	Have we complied?
1. To promote membership and the organisation's work	We promote membership locally with tenants, employees and other stakeholders, and nationally at meetings, conferences etc. We also promote digitally via website and social media platforms. We have done lots of this in 2018/19.	
2. To identify further opportunities for two-way communication between members and the organisation	We identify members' preferred communication method, and communicate in this way. We have made good use of social media, including Facebook to encourage two-way open conversations.	
3. To ensure communications encourage engagement with members	All members receive a welcome information pack on sign up. We keep members informed of events, meetings, vacancies, decisions, consultations and elections via a range of methods including direct targeting, members newsletter (Membership Matters) our intranet (for employees), website and social media channels. Staff are encouraging tenants to become members through routine day to day engagement.	

Aim #3

To engage with members and encourage involvement to ensure that members have an opportunity to influence decisions

Objective	Comments	Have we complied?
1. To identify a range of opportunities for members to get involved and have a say	This year members have been able to have a say in things like the appointment of our CE, value for money, social value, voting in elections and choosing our members' charity of the year.	
2. To ensure the views of members are understood and acknowledged	This year we have used members' feedback to inform some key decisions, and these will be fed into our new corporate strategy in 2019/20 to help set the direction for the next 3 years.	
3. To encourage more members to stand for election to the Democratic Body	We had an active campaign for both tenant and employee elections in 2018, and are actively encouraging members to consider putting themselves forward in 2019.	

Aim #4

To provide opportunities for members to benefit

Objective	Comments	Have we complied?
1. To identify what benefits/incentives/discounts members want	We actively encourage members to put forward ideas to determine what they could benefit from.	
2. To develop partnership working with a range of businesses across the borough	We have reviewed and increased the number of businesses that participate in our membership benefits scheme.	
3. To review the use of the benefits scheme	We undertook a review in January 2019. Most businesses were happy to continue with our scheme.	