

# Taf Fechan Housing Co-operative



12 homes  
Intermediate  
rented

For further  
information:  
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It had been anticipated for some years that the block of 12 boarded up empty flats that now houses Taf Fechan Housing Co-op would be demolished. However, leadership and cheap finance through an innovative loan finance arrangement from Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council made it possible for mutual housing association Merthyr Valleys Homes to develop Taf Fechan Housing Co-op as part of a wider regeneration programme in one of the most economically disadvantaged communities in Wales.

The 12 flats have now become high quality spacious two bedroomed homes for the first members of Taf Fechan Housing Co-op. The rents were set at intermediate level in order to encourage working people into the area and all of the applicants were expected to sign up as co-op members and participate in a 6 months training programme covering housing management, co-operative principles, team building and the co-op's budget and finances. In an area where it had been previously difficult to achieve sustainable tenancies, not only were the co-op's tenancies snapped up quickly, there is also a small waiting list and

demand for other local homes owned by Merthyr Valleys Homes has increased.

With a long term lease from Merthyr Valleys Homes who own the freehold of the block that enables repayment of the Council's loan, Taf Fechan Housing Co-op took over as landlord in February 2016. Initially registered with non-resident founder members to enable the co-op to be set up, in March, the new co-op members voted for their first management committee of 7 co-op members and elected their officers. Training and support for the committee is ongoing. Currently co-op volunteers are managing allocations of homes, void inspections, communal cleaning and their own governance and the co-op intends to take on management of their finances and rent collection within 6 months. With support from an independent consultant, the co-op has entered into an agreement with Merthyr Valleys Homes to provide the housing and other services that co-op volunteers are not carrying out. This agreement will be varied as the co-op develops the skills and confidence to take on other aspects of management of their homes.



The Co-operative is an excellent idea as it makes you come together as a community, you gain and learn new skills and meet new people. We also get to resolve any issues as a group and all get an equal vote on how things should be done which is great. All in all, being part of a Co-operative is a fantastic housing option.

**Michaela Adams, Co-operative member**



I've always been pro Social Housing, but there have been difficulties in the breakdown of communities, especially in South Wales. Living in a co-op gives the chance to try and get back to that, uniting tenants, creating strong communities and making people care for their environment. I'm glad to be part of it and glad it's doing so well.

**Thom Higgins, Taf Fechan Co-operative Chair**



Michaela Adams, Thomas Higgins, Mike Owen and Katie Howells signing the management agreement