

Home Farm Village Housing Co-operative



41 homes
Affordable rented

For further information:
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Lesley Griffiths AM, Minister for Communities & Tackling Poverty in the Welsh Government, with Chris O Meara, CEO Cadwyn, and Anne Harrington, Chair Home Farm Village Housing Co-operative

Situated next to the River Ely in Cardiff, Home Farm Village Housing Co-op was the first leasehold co-operative in Wales, opening in mid 2015. Its 41 flats and houses were developed by Cadwyn Housing Association, a community based housing association that houses people in and around Cardiff. Intending the scheme to be a housing co-operative from the outset, Cadwyn designed it with more green spaces than might be usual in such a development and with lower boundary walls and fences to encourage community interaction. High specification materials were used and eco-features included to give the site a top quality, sustainable design. The scheme was particularly supported by the Welsh Government as the first of its *pioneer* co-operative housing projects.

Home Farm Village Housing Co-op leases the properties from Cadwyn on a renewable 7 year lease, meaning that they are able to issue their own tenancies to their members. The co-op has full responsibility for its governance, finances and managing the properties, but has decided in the early stages whilst they are finding their feet to buy some services, such as day to day repairs and gas servicing from Cadwyn (although they have the option to source services from elsewhere in the future, including providing them voluntarily if they wish to). It is anticipated that the scheme reduces traditional housing management costs, which may mean that loans on the project will be repaid several years earlier, enabling Cadwyn to develop further homes.



We wanted to do something different in this development – enabling the people housed to take responsibility for their homes themselves. We saw co-ops operating elsewhere and liked the community feel of them – and this is what is happening at Home Farm. It's really exciting to see the enthusiasm of both the new members and Cadwyn's staff who have supported development of the co-op.

Chris O Meara – Chief Executive Cadwyn Housing Association



Most of the homes were let to people from Cardiff City Council's waiting list about 18 months before the members moved in. None of the founder members had prior knowledge of housing co-ops, but the long development period meant that the group gradually got to know each other, developed bonds and became a community. With some of the founder members having physical and mental health issues, the support developed in the community has been a particular feature of the co-op.

The long run in period also enabled an intensive training programme to be carried out on how to run a housing co-operative, which became even more intensive for Home

Farm's Board, elected by the group from their members in early 2015. As the Board elected its officer roles – Chair, Treasurer, PR, Rents, Allocations and Repairs Officers, tailored training was provided for those officers, and some co-op members have already started to explore how they can use the skills they have developed to further their employment opportunities.

Most of the training was provided by Cadwyn's staff, but because the project was also a new venture for Cadwyn, support was also provided by the CCH through a support programme operated by the Wales Co-operative Centre and funded by the Welsh Government and the Nationwide Foundation.



Home Farm Village Housing Co-operative members Clive, Jenna and Lisa



We love it - the community feeling with everyone looking out for each other and someone always there to help if needed is amazing. My daughter has made some amazing new friends and spends a lot of the time in the garden playing and talking with her new friends and neighbours instead of being inside on a computer or phone. Coming from a neighbourhood that I lived in for over 6 years and only knowing who lived either side of me, with no community spirit it has been a complete change. I know nearly everyone on the estate; people say hello and stop for a chat and offer help when they can. It's lovely to wake up and look out and see a lovely little community, everyone taking pride and enjoyment in their homes, and more importantly contributing to keeping it maintained.

Anne Harrington – Chair, Home Farm Village Housing Co-op

I'm really pleased. I am really happy of being a part of it and grateful to have been chosen. The only worry I have is that my English isn't good enough, but everyone is very nice and helpful and we have come to know each other more and more.

Beata Pietas – co-op member

It's been really exciting working with the group and seeing it grow. They have become a successful co-operative, and it's really been about us growing our knowledge of how to make the co-op work together.

Cadwyn's Ben Hodge, who worked with the developing co-operative