

**National Assembly for Wales Cross-Party Housing Group**  
**Annual General Meeting**  
**12-12.15pm 28<sup>th</sup> January 2015**  
Conference Rooms 21, Ty Hywel, Cardiff Bay

**AMs in attendance:** Sandy Mewies, Jocelyn Davies, Peter Black, Rhodri Glynn, Joyce Watson, Mark Isherwood, Keith Davies

**Others in attendance:**

Keith Edwards (Secretary),  
Paul Mewies, support to Chair  
Julie Nicholas, CIH Cymru  
Helen Northmore, CIH Cymru  
Sioned Hughes, CHC  
Auriol Miller, Cymorth Cymru  
Ron Walton, Vale 50+ forum  
Ceri Cryer, Age Cymru  
Alicja Zalesinska, Tai Pawb  
Elle McNeil, Citizens Advice Bureau

Derek Walker, Wales Co-op centre  
Steve Clarke, Welsh Tenants  
Nic Bliss, Confed. of c-op housing  
Vera Brinkworth, Care & repair Cymru  
Howard Lewis, Change Agents co-op  
John Puzey, Shelter Cymru  
Karen Wilkie, cooperative partnership  
Alex Bird, Consultancy cooperative

**Minutes**

1. **Welcome:** Sandy Mewies, AM & Chair of XPHG welcomed those present.
2. **Election of Chair**  
Sandy Mewies was nominated by Jocelyn Davies, no other nominations were made. Sandy Mewies was elected as Chair.
3. **Annual Report:** Keith Edwards presented the report content to the meeting, thanking AMs for their continued support, as well as giving thanks to the Chair for her commitment to the group, and to Paul Mewies for coordinating at the national assembly. The report and financial statement were approved by the group. The Chair gave a summary of the years activities. Thanking Keith Edwards for his work in providing secretariat services to the group over a number of years, and the support received from the Homes for All Cymru (H4AC) group. The Chair also stated that 2015/16 would be her final year as Chair of the XPHG, as she was standing down at the next election.
4. **Election of officers**  
Keith Edwards stood down as secretariat to the XPHG. There was a proposed transfer of coordinator role from Keith Edwards to Helen Northmore, new Director at CIH Cymru. The group agreed and Helen Northmore was nominated as secretary to the group.
5. **AOB:** none
6. **Close of AGM**

The XPHG AGM was immediately followed by:

## Cross-Party Housing Group & Cross Party Cooperative Group Joint Meeting

12.15-1.30pm, 28<sup>th</sup> January 2015

Conference Rooms 21, Ty Hywel, Cardiff Bay

### Minutes

1. **Welcome to joint meeting** - Sandy Mewies AM welcomed the cooperative-related organisations to the meeting and invited Derek Walker to give an update on the cooperative housing project in Wales.
2. **Co-operative Housing Project Update** - Dave Palmer, Nick Bliss and Derek Walker from Wales Cooperative Centre gave an update on the current project. A summary was given of the community work currently being undertaken within the pioneer project areas, the resources made available and commitment from Welsh Government, and the enthusiasm and support of officials. Reference was made to the *bringing democracy home* [document](#).

#### Questions & Comments

- a. Joyce Watson, AM expressed a wish to learn more about the project and how the model could link to the construction and employment opportunities.
- b. Howard Lewis commented that Homes for Life specifications in London could be utilised within principles of the cooperative housing project.
- c. Nick Bliss stated that he was very impressed with the Welsh Government approach and progress, including a recent visit to Mold.
- d. John Puzey stated that cooperative housing was supported within the H4AC manifesto
- e. Sandy Mewies asked whether cooperative housing could be applied to older persons housing provision, including ExtraCare
- f. Mark Isherwood stated that the Occupational Therapy alliance was also leading a call for the integration of lifetime homes principles in housing development
- g. Nick Bliss stated that developing different models of cooperatives was important to meet the needs of the local communities, and to ensure inclusivity of participants. He also stated that supporting cooperatives capacity building and skills development of members was crucial to success.
- h. Sioned Hughes stated that many CHC members were actively engaged within the projects and that cooperative extarcare developments may e viable in the future.
- i. Auriol Miller stated it is important to join up housing development with health and activity priorities
- j. Alex Bird asked about leasehold reform and stated that there was no policy in Wales regarding buy-out of leasehold for freehold and self-management options including cooperatives.
- k. Keith Edwards stated that the Renting Homes content shared to date does not deal with leaseholders

- l. Sandy Mewies asked if it was possible to receive more information on this and to agenda as discussion item for a future XPHG
- m. Steve Clarke stated this was an issue for a number of groups Welsh Tenants are working with, who were poorly advised during stock-transfer processes and now had a range of issues to address.
- n. John Puzey stated that Shelter Cymru has experts who can provide information.
- o. Elle McNeil stated that Compare the Market had undertaken research on regulation and consumer rights and leaseholders.
- p. Alicja Zalesinska asked if there were any examples of cooperative housing projects working with minority groups
- q. Nick Bliss said he was unaware of any such projects, but that it was likely some would emerge.
- r. Dave Palmer referred to the 'vintage green' group in Cardiff an older woman's housing cooperative.

#### Actions:

- Wales cooperative centre to send information on housing cooperative projects to Joyce Watson
- 'Leaseholders' to be agenda item for future XPHG
- Elle McNeil to forward link to Compare the Market research to XPHG & H4AC

### **3. Homes for All Cymru manifesto presentation & discussion**

John Puzey, Shelter Cymru presented the H4AC manifesto. He explained that many members had worked on the document and signed up to it for the 2016 NAW election. Integral to the document was the links between housing and combatting poverty, promoting health and wellbeing, and that housing should be considered as a key form of national infrastructure. H4AC request to AMs on the XPHG was to consider what they would be able to support within the content of the manifesto, and take the manifesto back to their parties.

#### **Questions and Comments**

- a) Keith Edwards suggested that individual members of H4AC could meet with individual XPHG members to develop consensus regarding the manifesto
- b) Sandy Mewies stated she would be happy to submit the manifesto to her own party to support content and demonstrate how housing links to multiple Ministries
- c) Ron Walton stated it was important to understand how housing supports multi-generational communities
- d) Sioned Hughes reinforced the role of housing as infrastructure and in the importance of key messages regarding housings links to economy and wellbeing.
- e) Sandy Mewies stated that she would ensure that the manifesto is sent to the First Minister and other Ministers, and that as all parties are looking at political manifestoes currently this was good timing.
- f) Dave Palmer stated that the Wales cooperative centre also supported the H4AC manifesto

- g) Jocelle Lovell stated that she would like to see a greater focus on the private rented sector within the manifesto
- h) Keith Edwards suggested that both the Residential Landlords Association and National landlords Association could be invited to join H4AC
- i) John Puzey stated that H4AC will discuss extension of membership at the next meeting
- j) Ceri Cryer stated that housing information and choice for older people was important component of sector offer, and not just a focus on crisis-intervention. Evidence-based policy was important regarding tackling issues of social isolation in communities.

#### **Actions**

- AMs to contact H4AC Chair to arrange individual meetings with H4AC representatives as required
- Sandy Mewies, XPHG Chair, to call a meeting with Keith Edwards and Helen Northmore to complete secretariat handover and agree the next XPHG content, date and venue.

#### **4. Close**