

Visit to Plas Y Mor and Llys Y Werin

Assisted Living and Day Care Centres

Burry Port, Carmarthenshire & Gorseinon, Swansea

On Friday 27th February, Catherine Thomas, Rhodri Glyn Thomas and staff from Members Research and Committee Services visited two sheltered housing schemes developed by a partnership between Gwalia Housing Group and the local authorities.

Plas Y Mor, Burry Port

The Plas Y Mor development in Burry Port consists of 38 self-contained one and two bedroom flats, communal facilities and a day centre designed around a communal garden. The accommodation is divided into two blocks both being linked by a glass foyer which is used as a communal area by the residents. The foyer is designed as a light, glazed structure, combining several functions. It is the entrance hall, a focal meeting point and an internal garden. The "Glass Street" is enjoyed by both residents and visitors, in all weather conditions and also provides the entrance link to the Day Centre facilities.

The Day Centre incorporates common rooms, rest and activity areas, dining facilities, a laundry room, a treatment room, assisted bathrooms, a training/ rehabilitation kitchen, a hairdressing salon and a shop. Residents of the scheme benefit from a warden's service, communal TV aerial, emergency alarm, use of guest bedrooms and a laundry with tumble dryers. Gwalia provide cleaning of communal areas and maintenance of the building and its grounds.

The design of the building is driven by a strong commitment to the delivery of an environmentally sensitive form of construction. The building fabric comprises a high performance, timber-framed construction and uses recycled cellulose insulation. External openings are fitted with timber/aluminium composite, windows and doors. These are glazed with low-emissivity, argon filled double-glazing.

Heating and hot water in the facility is provided by a communal heating system powered by twin bio-mass boilers. The boilers are fuelled from locally procured wood-pellets, which is the most environmentally friendly heating fuel available. Heating is also delivered by solar heating panels, which provide around 60% of the annual hot water requirement of the building. The glass street also acts as a collector of the sun's energy and provides useful solar gains. A heat recovery system is installed, to maximise the benefit of this pre-heated air and to distribute it into cooler parts of the building. The glass garden is ventilated by passive means, thus reducing electricity demand from the extract fans that would

otherwise be needed.

To reduce electricity demand from lighting, the first floor corridors all have natural sunlight from light tubes that go through the top floor and the ceiling of the ground floor corridors. There are also movement sensitive halogen lights throughout the building's corridors.

These energy efficient fittings cut costs quite considerably and a resident would only have to pay an average of £4.50 a month for energy bills.

The construction contract for the scheme was valued at just over £3.1 million and the total development cost, including land and fees, was £3,548,007.

Funding the project was made up of £1.7 million of Social Housing Grant from the Welsh Assembly Government, nearly £400,000 from Carmarthenshire County Council, with the balance from Gwalia Housing Group. There were also financial contributions from charitable trusts.

As the project is a joint venture between Gwalia Housing Group and Carmarthenshire County Council, local Councillors are included on the management committee.

Llys Y Werin, Gorseinon

Llys Y Werin was built in 1991 in Gorseinon, Swansea and provides 42 high quality flats with day care services for residents from across the region.

All residents within the scheme live independently in their own home. 27 sheltered tenants receive support from staff when and if they require it. There are 15 frail residents that are cared for in their own homes and receive a 24 hour service all year round. The cost of the care is funded by the individual's benefits and allowances. This model of care combines the very best of provision of services from all agencies involved which includes, the City and County of Swansea, the Swansea NHS Trust and the Local Health Bodies.

The Local Authority, together with Tai Cymdogaeth Cyf, provide services to the older people in the community through the Llys y Werin Day Centre.

The average age of a resident in the Llys Y Werin Day Centre is between 84 & 86 with a high proportion of residents in their 90's. Female residents make up a larger ratio in Llys Y Werin and the residential team leader can sometimes experience difficulty in encouraging male residents to participate in activities.

There are 25 employees at the scheme and are mainly from the locality. They experience very few problems with recruiting staff and they have a very low turnover of staff with transfers to other schemes very rarely taking place. Staff are also encouraged by Gwalia to enrol onto a wide range of courses and

to develop their careers in their chosen field. Many of the staff that work in Llys y Werin are all qualified up to NVQ level 2 standard or higher.

The facility provides many services for its residents such as a hair salon, which employs a freelance hair stylist and there is also a visiting library with a wide selection of books and audio recordings.

The staff at Llys y Werin feel that it is important for residents to have the opportunity to invite members of their family and friends to stay over night when they visit. The facility provides 2 guest rooms (one double & one single) which have en-suite bathrooms and are available at £5 per night.