

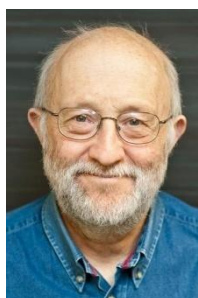
## **Board Member Biogs** **Updated December 2011**



**Tamsin Stirling** is a Board member who was independently appointed to the Board on 30th August 2006. She is the Chair of the Board and is a member of the Audit & Ethics Committee and Staffing Sub Committee for Bron Afon. She is an independent housing consultant working mainly in Wales focusing on research, policy, strategy development and information dissemination and has extensive knowledge of the housing policy agenda. She is a Fellow of the Chartered Institute of Housing and the editor of Welsh Housing Quarterly, a housing and regeneration magazine published by Cardiff University. In a voluntary capacity she was Chair of Rhondda Housing Association between 1998 and 2003 and is currently a Board member of Llamau Limited, which provides services to young people and women at risk of homelessness in South East Wales.



**Huw Parry** is a Board member who was independently appointed on 16<sup>th</sup> September 2010. He is currently Head of Income and Billing at Dwr Cymru Welsh Water where he has responsibility for tariffs, billing, collections and debt management and where he oversees operational contracts for metering and billing services. Recently, he has worked on projects with Defra and the Welsh Assembly Government on tariff and affordability matters relating to water and sewerage charges. He is a qualified accountant (FCCA) and has several years' experience as an Auditor. On a voluntary basis he is on a Sub Committee of Moneyline Cymru which provides ethical money lending and financial advice to people on low income.



**Chris Thomas** is a Board member who was independently appointed to the Board on 30th August 2006. He is the Vice Chair of the Board and is a member of the Staffing Sub Committee for Bron Afon. He is a retired local government officer. He qualified as a town planner, working in inner London for 13 years. During this period he was also a part-time tutor for the Workers Educational Association and a committee member of a Housing Rights Project working with Housing Co-ops. He subsequently moved to a career in housing and worked for Newport Council, and held the posts of Head of Housing and Property Maintenance and Head of Housing Strategy. From 2003 to 2007 he worked part-time for a firm of social research consultants. He has recently been co-opted as a Community Councillor in his home area in Torfaen.



**Mary Barnett** is a Board member who was appointed to the Board by the Local Authority on 17th May 2007 and is a member of the Staffing Sub Committee for Bron Afon. She has been a Torfaen Councillor since 1995. After graduating from Cardiff University (English & Biblical Studies) she became a qualified teacher and devoted her professional life to education. Mary sits on the Boards of Coleg Gwent, Careers Wales (Gwent) and the WJEC, she is also a governor of two Primary schools and Chair of the Torfaen Children and Young People Partnership. Until she retired as a lecturer at the Pontypool

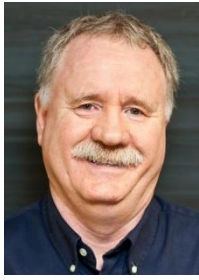
Campus of Coleg Gwent, she was Pontypool Chair of the National Association of Teachers in Further and Higher Education and Chair of the NATFHE Co-ordinating Committee of Coleg Gwent, responsible for representing the interests of thousands of staff including members from the Prison Education Service in Wales. Mary was also trained by the Further Education Funding Council as an Associate Assessor for the Inspectorate of FE and Tertiary Colleges. In addition to her many other community interests, Mary was a founder member of Torfaen Women's Aid, is a Board member of Communities First in Thornhill, Executive Member of Torfaen CAB and until its demise, was a member of the Torfaen Local Health Board and its Equalities Champion. Mary has been nominated by the Welsh Local Government Association (WLGA) to be its representative on the National Forum for Educational Research. Mary is the Cabinet Member for Children and Young People on Torfaen and the Lead Member for Children, Youth Service and Play Service, a Member of Torfaen SE Wales Education Consortium, the CYPP representative on Torfaen Local Services Board Strategy Group and the Torfaen Representative on WLGA Social Services Policy Group. Mary sits on numerous other bodies including Torfaen SACRE (Standing Advisory Conference for Religious Education) and WLGA Social Services Policy Group. Mary is a former Mayor of Torfaen.



**Sarah Richards M.B.E** is a Board member who was appointed to the Board by the Local Authority on 14th July 2006. She is retired and worked in professional offices all her working life, latterly as Office Manager for a firm of Insurance Brokers. Sarah has served on various Local Authorities since 1971, and for twelve years on Cwmbran Development Corporation Board. She is the Chair of Age Concern Torfaen and involved in a variety of voluntary activities including governor of two local schools. She is also involved in Mental Health work for the Aneurin Bevan Health Board. She was awarded the MBE by the Queen in 2004 for her work for the local community.



**Jeff Rees** is a Board member who was appointed to the Board by the Local Authority on 13th June 2008, and is a member of the Audit & Ethics Committee for Bron Afon. He is the Plaid Cymru Group Leader on Torfaen CBC. He is the Chair of the Learning Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee. He has particular involvement in Housing, Regeneration and Education, and in addition to being a board member at Bron Afon he is also a member of the Primary and Secondary Joint Committee and the South East Wales Education Forum. He is a Governor at Fairwater High School and Ysgol Bryn Onnen.



**Carl Witcombe** is a Board member who was elected to the Board by tenants on 4th June 2009, is Chair of the Staffing Sub Committee and a member of the Audit & Ethics Committee for Bron Afon. He is a graduate of the University of Wales with a BSc (Hons) Health & Social Care. He worked in the Newport Youth Justice Team and then the Monmouthshire and Torfaen Youth Offending Team. His jobs included Youth Offending Team Officer, Project Manager and Bail Remand Support Organiser. He has been a tenant since 1969.



**Aneurin James** is a Board member who was appointed to the Board by the Local Authority on 21st May 2009. He has been a Councillor since 1996 and was Mayor during 2008/9. He is a retired Local Government Officer and Trade Unionist who completing his national service in the RAF. He has lived in the same home in Pontnewydd for 53 years. He sits on a number of committees including Housing and Community Safety and the Cwmbran Regeneration and Operational Groups.



**Elizabeth Haynes** is a Board member who was appointed to the Board by the Local Authority on 10th July 2009. She has been a Councillor since May 2008 and is the Leader of the Independent Group. She has been self-employed for most of her working life and runs her own catering business. Elizabeth is involved with the St Dials and Greenmeadow Community Hall and sits on a number of Council committees which include Planning Committee and

Appointments Committee.



**Catherine Price** is a Board member who was elected by tenants to the Board on 29th September 2009. She is a retired teacher whose career spanned Nursery, Infant-Junior and Special Needs children. On retiring she served as a school governor and studied law. She is a member of the Patients Panel for the Gwent Health Service Trust, and is an active member of community groups including Compact, Area Forum, and Sheltered Housing.



**Deborah Smyth** is a Board member who was elected by tenants to the Board on 29th September 2009. She is a graduate of BA (Hons) Counselling and Studies of Society from the University of Wales. She volunteers at several local charities.



**Jean Lewis** is a Board Member who was elected to the Board by tenants in September 2010. Jean has lived and worked in Torfaen for over 40 years. She is a retired nurse and worked as a District Nurse, Sister and Matron and is a current member of a Welsh Nursing

Board. During her professional life, Jean had long experience of sitting on many advisory committees, staff training, budget management, staff appointments and making judgements under pressure. Nursing patients on a daily basis in their homes, Jean has a good knowledge of local housing estates and is used to dealing with the many problems encountered by tenants. Jean is a strong believer in equality and rights of the elderly and disabled people. She will be a strong voice helping to ensure that Bron Afon develops policies and procedures that are efficient, open and accountable to all.



**Gavin Smart** is a Board member who was independently appointed on 24<sup>th</sup> September 2011 and is the Assistant Director for Research and Futures at the National Housing Federation the trade body representing housing associations in England. At the Federation he is responsible for leading policy work on public investment in the housing association sector and the broader finance policy agenda including work on sector financial market

downturn. His responsibilities also include sector accounting standards. He also heads up the Federation's research and information function including co-ordinating a stream of futures work focussing on the long term challenges facing the housing association sector. Prior to joining the Federation Gavin spent five years at the then ODPM latterly heading up the high demand housing markets research team. He was responsible for commissioning a large programme of external research and providing advice to senior officials and Ministers. He began his career as a researcher at the School for Policy Studies at the University of Bristol where he worked with a number of the UK's leading housing academics. He was involved in a large number of research studies covering both housing and wider public policy commissioned by organisations such as DoE/DETR/ODPM, Joseph Rowntree Foundation, Economic and Social Research Council and the Local Government Association. He retains an active interest in the study and analysis of housing and housing policy and is a member of the management committee of the Housing Studies Association the academic learned society for the study of housing in the UK.



**Louise Kirby** is a Board member who was independently appointed on 29<sup>th</sup> November 2011 and is the Head of Human Resources, Change Management and Internal Communications at the Intellectual Property Office (IPO). This means she regularly deals with people on all aspects which affect them – from recruitment through to retirement and everything in between. Louise began her Civil Service career in Information Technology (IT) in Newport at the Office for National

Statistics. She has had a variety of jobs throughout her 23 years working in the public sector – including Learning and Development consultant; Statistical Analyst; Business Analyst; Business Improvement Head; Business Change Manager and Project Manager. Louise focuses on helping people to deal with change at work through her experience in coaching individuals and facilitating groups. She is also Deputy to the IPO's Business Support Director which covers People, Estates and IT.