



CITYWEST HOMES

Press release – 22 November 2016

Volunteers celebrate tenant participation guru and a positive end to 2016

Volunteer residents who make up CityWest Homes' new Residents' Council and Resident Area Panels celebrated their positive start to 2016 and the retirement of a tenant participation guru at a special event held in central London last night (21 November 2016).

The Lord Mayor of Westminster, Councillor Steve Summers, also attended the event held at Westminster City Hall's Parlour with views across London, sparkling in the evening rain.

In an inspiring speech, the Lord Mayor thanked every resident volunteer on behalf of all residents who will benefit from their help. He said: "What you do as a volunteer is so important. You'll be able to make a difference to people's lives. We will do what we can to support you with new skills and training and in turn, you'll help us to build stronger communities."

Part of a new resident involvement structure, which strengthens and leverages the skills of its customers, CityWest Homes' Residents' Council and Resident Area Panels give residents a voice in shaping service and policies by working collaboratively with CityWest Homes and by scrutinising the work the organisation does and suggesting solutions.

A recruitment campaign during 2016 ensured representatives were from all age ranges and minority groups. 94% of those appointed had not been actively involved with the company before, are very proud to live in Westminster and were attracted to the opportunity to help shape the future of housing services.

Part of the special evening was to thank 81-year-old resident Richard Tarling, who recently retired as chairman of Charfield Court, a tenant management organisation (TMO) in west London after 16 years. Acknowledged as a 'tenant participation guru' by CityWest Homes, Richard also retired from the National Federation of TMOs where he lobbied central and local government to increase opportunities for residents to manage their own homes.

Born in Hounslow, west London, Richard was five years old when World War Two broke out. He says growing up during that time, where people of all races put their lives on the line and women were at the forefront in keeping industry going, gave him a keen sense of what community can mean, which he feels has now been lost.

Richard commented: "There's never been such turmoil for the government on housing policy, especially affordable housing and getting people onto the housing

ladder. Having your own home is a lovely idea but we should be encouraging people into responsibility first.”

Mervyn Thomason, TMO manager for CityWest Homes, said: “Richard has lived all over the world, working for some big organisations. When he moved back to London to retire, he decided to get involved in housing and give back to the community. It’s great to recognise his achievements in front of an audience where many are only beginning their tenant participation journey. We are really looking forward to working with our newest volunteers to help us shape the Westminster community.”

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Photograph captions:

IMAGE 1: Westminster resident Richard Tarling receives recognition from Lord Mayor of Westminster, Councillor Steve Summers, for his contribution to supporting social housing tenants

IMAGE 2: Volunteer residents gather for the special event at Westminster City Hall last night