

YOUR VOICE

HOUSING NEWS FOR
TENANTS & LEASEHOLDERS



NORTHAMPTON
PARTNERSHIP HOMES

**Seasons
greetings from
all at NPH!**

**New homes in
Collingtree**

Issue 18
Winter 2020

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Welcome

to the winter issue of Your Voice

We hope you like the new look and change of name - find out more inside about how residents had their say about your newsletter.

In each issue, one of NPH's leadership team will welcome you to Your Voice. I'm thrilled to be able to introduce you to some of the fantastic work my team has been delivering.

But before you get stuck into the latest issue, we would like to take the opportunity to thank you for your continued support and patience in what has been a challenging year for all of us. We hope that you and your loved ones are keeping well, and we wish you all the best for 2021.

Keep reading to find out about a brand-new development in



Collingtree and some of the work we're doing across town to invest in your homes and neighbourhoods. We've also got an update about our popular nature project where you can get involved with our next giveaway!

If you have a story to share with us or any feedback on Your Voice, please get in touch we'd love to hear from you.

Helen Town, assistant director: asset management.

Notice board

Flu vaccination

This year, the flu vaccination is being offered free of charge to more people than ever. You may be eligible if you:

- Are aged 50 and over (including those who'll be 50 by 31 March 2021);
- Have certain health conditions;
- Are pregnant;
- Are in long-stay residential care;
- Receive a carer's allowance, or are the main carer for an

older or disabled person who may be at risk if you get sick;

- Live with someone on the NHS shielded patient list;
- Are a frontline health or social care worker.

Speak to your GP surgery, local pharmacy or midwifery service if you're pregnant for more information. Go to www.nhs.uk/conditions/vaccinations/flu-influenza-vaccine/ to find out more.

Festive arrangements

Your bin collections may change over the festive period. You can check your bin collections online at www.northampton.gov.uk/info/200084/bins-waste-and-recycling/2436/christmas-2020-bin-collections to find out more.

Please do not leave your bins or rubbish out for collection on the wrong days, it can attract rats and other vermin.

NPH festive opening hours:

- Thursday 24th December - normal opening hours
- Friday 25th December - closed
- Monday 28th December - closed
- Tuesday 29th December - closed
- Wednesday 30th December - closed
- Thursday 31st December - closed
- Friday 1st January - closed

We do have an amazing team of colleagues on-hand for emergencies during the festive period, please only call if you absolutely need to 0300 3307003.

Mental health support

This year has been hard for many people. If you need support with your mental wellbeing, the Changing Minds IAPT service offer a free, confidential service to help with low mood, financial worries, anxiety and isolation.

Access the service by going to www.nhft.nhs.uk/iapt or calling **0300 999 1616** (9-5 weekdays).

For support at any time of the day or night, call **0800 448 0828** to speak to a friendly mental health navigator.

Can you help us run our community hubs?

We're looking for a team of volunteers to help us run our community hubs. If you're interested in helping with the day to day running of the hubs, maintenance or outdoor gardening work, contact our resident involvement team to find out more: getinvolved@nph.org.uk or **01604 837836**.



NORTHAMPTON PARTNERSHIP HOMES

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@NPH_news



NPH Connect



www.nph.org.uk

Large print?

If you would like a version of this magazine in large print, or another language, please call

0300 330 7003



Reader Friendly

Your involvement



Scrutiny Panel

We hope you like your new-look newsletter. Following the Scrutiny Panel's review of the magazine, we've freshened up the design, tweaked the name and included their suggestions for content. Members of the panel adapted brilliantly to virtual meetings and carried out a full review of this publication.

The Panel's next mission is to review the work of our rent income team's financial inclusion and welfare service. The outcome of their review will feature in the next issue of Your Voice, online and on our social media channels.

Remember - you don't need to join the Scrutiny Panel to get involved. If you have any feedback to share or would like to know more about how you can get involved, just get in touch:

-  **NPH Connect**
-  **@NPH_news**
-  **getinvolved@nph.org.uk**
-  **01604 837836**

Learn something new

NPH residents who live or work with young people are able to access free online workshops from the Young Gamers and Gamblers Education Trust. In association with our construction partner ENGIE, the workshops aim to help you educate and safeguard children and young people about the potential harm of gaming and gambling.

The training is made up of two sessions:

- **Session 1** (90 minutes) covers the gambling and

gaming industry, the blurred lines between gaming and gambling, spotting gaming and gambling disorder, eSports and loot boxes.

- **Session 2** (60 minutes) covers the resources available from the Young Gamers and Gamblers Education Trust to help you support the children and young people you live or work with.

After the workshops you will receive:

- A certificate of attendance; and



- A digital copy of the "In The Know" booklet.

To find out more and to sign up to the course, go to www.ygam.org or call **0203 837 4963**.

Nature project

First up - an update on the hedgehog houses we offered for the Autumn phase of our nature project. They were all snapped up quickly and are now out in the community waiting for hedgehogs to make themselves at home!

We visited some happy residents on Blackberry Lane who have built their hedgehog houses. As you can see from the photos, they're looking great in their gardens.



"It's beautiful, I can't thank NPH enough for giving me this opportunity. Thank you so much!"

Pam, Blackberry Lane resident

Christmas Lights

We love seeing your how your Christmas decorations brighten up your neighbourhood!



Lumbertubs

Your involvement

More giveaways!

Following the success of our autumn wildlife habitat giveaway, our winter offer is a selection of trees that are suitable for small gardens - your choice of tree, free for NPH residents.

Selected for their colour, interest for wildlife or fruiting potential, these trees will make a wonderful addition to your garden. Choose from Crab Apple, Rowan, Hazel, Silver Birch or Wild Pear - there are even a limited number of apple trees (we're already thinking about the crumble!)

As with any great offer, get in there quick; the trees are offered on a first-come first-served basis, and are limited to one per household.

And that's not all...

Shout out now if you'd like to get involved in our Spring offer too. We'll be giving away 60 growing kits so you can start to grow your own veg in 2021. You'll get a flat packed growing box with everything you need to put it together; compost, seeds and a trowel. We'll be giving these away in March and April, but it's not too early to get your name on the list.

You can send us a message on Facebook (NPH Connect), email getinvolved@nph.org.uk or call us on **01604 837836** to get your hands on one of our freebies.

Your community

It's good to talk (and walk!)

We loved this update from Emmanuel Church's Walkie-Talkie group.

This group brings young people together for wellbeing walks. The physical and mental health benefits of walking in the fresh air are undeniable so Mell Efde, the group's youth worker wanted to make sure that the winter weather didn't get in their way. Happy to Help, NPH's CIC was delighted to be able to fund the "Walkie Talkies" to buy waterproof clothing for group members to keep warm and dry on those wet, muddy walks!

As you can see in the photo, the waterproofs have already been put to excellent use!



Support through tough times

Prostate cancer is the most commonly diagnosed cancer in the UK, with around 1 in 8 men diagnosed with the disease in their lifetime. The Northampton Prostate Cancer Support Group supports men with prostate cancer and their families in the Northampton area.

Richard Truby, chair of the group, told us: "If you have any symptoms of prostate cancer, it's really important you talk to your GP."

The five classic signs of prostate cancer in men are:

- 1 A painful burning sensation when you urinate or ejaculate.
- 2 Frequent urination particularly at night.
- 3 Difficulty starting or stopping urination.
- 4 Erectile dysfunction.
- 5 Blood in the urine or semen.

One or any of these symptoms is a good reason to consult your GP. However men, particularly over 45's, can still experience prostate health problems without noticeable symptoms. It is therefore important to be alert to the possibility and to discuss with your GP if you have any concerns.

Richard added: "If you have been recently diagnosed, or you're living with prostate cancer and need



some support, please get in touch with us. It can be reassuring to speak with someone who knows what you're going through and who can help you prepare for any treatment you need. We're here to support you and would love to welcome you to our group."

Like so many others, the group has adapted to virtual meetings this year. They currently run a Zoom coffee morning every Wednesday at 11am, and a Zoom members' meeting on the first Tuesday of every month at 7pm. They look forward to meeting at a NPH community hub as soon as it's safe to meet in person again.

To find out more about the group, go to www.northamptonpcsg.org.uk, or call Barrie on 07396 174 904 or email northamptonpcsg@gmail.com. If the phone isn't answered, please leave a message and Barrie will get back to you as soon as possible.

Getting to know....
Pauline Riley

Welcome to this new regular feature, where you get meet one of your fellow residents. If you would like to take part, we'd love to hear from you. Meanwhile, it's over to Pauline who squeezed us into her busy schedule for a quick chat about life, lockdown and what she loves about Northampton.

Thank you so much for finding time to talk to us Pauline. First off - how long have you been a tenant with NPH?

I came to Northampton in 2005 and have lived in a couple of places before moving into Lakeview, where I live now. It's a lovely new building, but because I down-sized, I now have too much stuff. I've always been a bit of a gatherer.

What do you love about your neighbourhood?

It's very close to everything I like to do. I love walking and Eastfield



Park is just around the corner. I go for lots of walks round there and can't help myself litter picking while I'm at it! Bradlaugh Fields is also nearby and I can walk to my church in Moulton, although before lockdown people kept offering me lifts and I could never say no!

How did you become interested in NPH's involvement groups?

One of my neighbours told me about the Resident Forum, so I went along to that. Then the face to face meetings stopped because of COVID-19, so I joined some of the Zoom groups. I like to know what's going on, maybe I'm a bit nosy? Seriously though, I do like to promote community and positive things that are happening.

How have you found the transition from face to face to virtual meetings?

I quite like it, because we can sit and chat from home. It can be difficult when lots of people want to speak, but as long as you have someone organising the meeting and making sure everyone gets a chance to have their say, it works well.

I think we should keep this up when things go back to normal.

It could help people who can't get out, or have less time so they can still join in.

We love our town at NPH. What's your favourite Northampton spot?

Well, home is my favourite place and is so important to me. But as I like walking, I would also say lots of the green spaces in Northampton - Westone Mill, Sixfields lakes and quarry plus all the places near me for walking.

I'd love to go to the top of the lift tower, but I'm not up for abseiling back down!

What have you been doing to keep yourself busy throughout the pandemic?

I'm involved with lots of things. I host an ancestry group with 11 members. Trying to trace family members takes a long time. I'm also part of the National Trust and I'm a volunteer with Happy @ Home, I talk to three people regularly for company and support.

I'll tell you something I've discovered since lockdown - virtual tours. I've been to Tel Aviv, Budapest, Barcelona and I'm off to Paris later!

Happy @ Home is a telephone befriending service in Northampton. If you know of a lonely person who needs support or you would like to volunteer to help, please contact Debbie Larkins on 07718 651631 or happyathome@voluntaryimpact.org.uk

#MoreNewHomes...

Welcome to Collingtree!

We recently completed work on 17 two-bedroom and 4 three-bedroom family homes in Toms Close, Collingtree. The new homes have kitchen-diners, large rooms, lots of storage and big gardens. There's also a park nearby so families can enjoy lots of time outdoors, which has been even more important this year!

Building these homes has been a joint effort, with support from Northampton Borough Council and amazing work from our contractor, Jeakins Weir. They carried on working through tough times this year, and we're

sure you'll agree they've done a fantastic job.

We would like to say a huge thank you to the residents of Toms Close, who lived with the building works while we worked to complete the new homes. We are truly grateful for your understanding and patience.

Normally, we'd hold an opening event to welcome families to their new homes and give them an opportunity to meet their neighbours. Sadly, we haven't been able to do that due to COVID-19 restrictions, so we've done things a little differently. We made a video which has been shared on our social channels.



Take a look at our video where you can meet Shakil, a new resident at Toms Close and hear how happy he is with his new home. You can also get a look at the new homes, and hear from NPH, Northampton Borough Council, Jeakins Weir and the local community.

www.nph.org.uk/toms-close-1

-  NPH Connect
-  @NPH_news

We'd like to say a big welcome to everyone who has moved into Toms Close. We wish you lots of happiness in your new homes!



"I can't believe this is my home, it still feels quite surreal! I'm really enjoying putting my own touches on my new home, I love it!"

New NPH resident

#InvestingInYourNeighbourhood

You may have seen the NPH team in your neighbourhood. We're working hard to invest in your homes to make them more modern and energy efficient.

be fitted with new cladding and windows. Take a look at the photo on the right, we think it looks great!

Head to our website to find out more - you can use our interactive map to find out what's going on in your area.

www.nph.org.uk/new-build-and-neighbourhood-investment



Your Voice editors took a trip to Briar Hill to check out the external works happening there. All NPH homes in the area will

#MoreNewHomes

Our new build programme has continued throughout the pandemic and it's wonderful to see residents moving into their new homes. We're doing everything we can to find opportunities to build more homes and here are just a few of the projects we're working on.

Moray Lodge

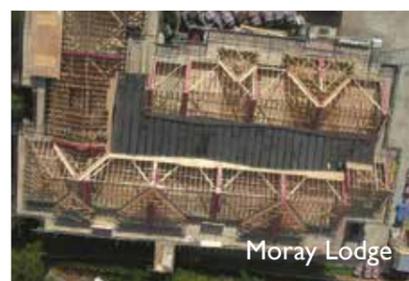
Another supported scheme in Duston, this time with 20 homes for adults with additional needs.



Lings

Oak Tree Rise

This development in Thorplands will provide 9 bungalows with support, for adults with additional needs.



Moray Lodge

Lings

An example of the many smaller developments we're working on across town, we've completed four new homes with 4 bedrooms in Lings.



Kingsthorpe

Kingsthorpe

These much needed 2 bedroom homes are looking great!



Riverside House

Riverside House

We're really excited about this new office conversion! It will create 60, 1 and 2 bedroom flats in a brilliant location close to the town centre. Keep an eye out for progress updates in the coming months.

We regularly share updates on our social media channels, make sure you don't miss out and give us a follow!

 **NPH Connect**

 **@NPH_news**

Meet the team

Meet Peter Gates, Housing Asset Strategy

Tell us about your job

For the past 3 years, NPH has been installing new door entry systems across Northampton. I've been overseeing the project, and we've installed systems into over 550 blocks, and approximately 1,443 separate doors.

I make sure our residents get the right key fobs and that the doors are installed to the right standard.

These new systems mean that our residents are even more secure in their blocks and because they are more efficient, we're saving on running costs.

We are hoping that the project won't be further delayed due to COVID restrictions, and we finish the work by the end of March 2021.

What do you love about your job?

I started with Northampton Borough Council 44 years ago, which makes me one of the longest serving workers at NPH! I've been fortunate enough to work in lots of different

departments and see great changes in the town.

In one of my first jobs, we had a coal fireplace as our heating, which gives you an idea just how much has changed.

With my job, I feel very lucky as I get to see the actual finished product once a door has been installed. And most of all, meeting satisfied residents who now have extra peace of mind is a great feeling.

What do you do in your spare time?

I'm a big music fan, in fact, I used to run my own mobile disco back in the day! I must have around 5,000 7" vinyls in my collection. Always been big on Motown, Soul and 60's music.

- If you lose your key fob and need a new one, you can purchase another for £42, just call **0300 3307003**.

"Meeting satisfied residents who now have extra peace of mind is a great feeling"

Peter



New handy person service coming soon!

We love hearing your ideas about NPH services and sharing your views really can make a difference. Through our resident involvement groups, we heard the same kind of question from different residents - "how can we support residents who struggle to maintain their home?"

The Happy to Help board got to work and started looking at how we could help with the little jobs around the home that a tenant is responsible for, but for mobility or mental health reasons, they are unable to manage.

We're thrilled that from early 2021, we will be launching a brand-new handy person service. Whether you're struggling with putting up a few shelves, building flat-pack furniture, decorating, attaching curtain poles or even changing a hard-to-reach lightbulb, there will soon be someone trustworthy you can call who doesn't charge a fortune. Costs will be calculated based on the job you need and your individual circumstances.

If you've got a job you're struggling with, please get in touch with us, we can't wait to introduce you to the newest member of #TeamNPH.

 **NPH Connect**

 **@NPH_news**



Were you listening?

BBC Radio Northampton paid our Paint Shop a visit.

 ur doors are open again and we're looking forward to welcoming you back and hearing about your home makeovers.

Deena Robertson, one of our fantastic Lakeview residents, spoke to the breakfast show reporter about why you should pay the Paint Shop a visit:

"I read about the Paint Shop in the last newsletter so thought I would go to Kings Heath and take a look. I'd been wanting to redecorate my bedroom for a while, but paint is so expensive, I hadn't been able to manage it. I would recommend anyone to go there, you can get tins of paint for £1 or £2, what a bargain!"



Let's talk energy

It's been quite a year and many of us will be spending more time at home than ever before. As the cold weather sets in, it could be a good time to check whether you're on the best and cheapest tariff for your current circumstances.

We've teamed up with Energy Angels to provide you with a comparison service that is accredited with Ofgem and shows every tariff available. All you need to do is head to www.energyangels.co.uk/n-p-h/ and follow the simple instructions on-screen. If you don't have internet access and would like to see if you can save money, just call **01604 838210**, leave a message and one of our lovely resident involvement officers will call you back.

The Government has launched an emergency package to make sure that you don't face hardships from heating or lighting your home during the pandemic. Your energy supplier will talk to you about options that could help you, including:

- A review of payment plans, including debt repayment;

- Support with higher bills caused by using extra energy in self-isolation;
- Payment breaks or reductions in how much you can pay;
- Giving you longer to make your payments; and
- In some circumstances, access to hardship funds.

So, if you are struggling with your energy bills, it's worth getting in touch with your supplier as soon as you can.

We've put some energy saving tips together for you on our website - take a look, it could save you a few quid!

www.nph.org.uk/energy-saving-tips

If you were born on or before 5th May 1953, you may be eligible to a Winter Fuel Payment of between £100 and £300, tax-free. Check www.gov.uk/winter-fuel-payment for more details.



Your unitary Council

You may have heard that local government in Northamptonshire is changing. Currently, we provide housing services on behalf of Northampton Borough Council but, from 1 April 2021, Northampton Borough Council will be replaced by West Northamptonshire Council.

Northampton Borough, Daventry District and South Northamptonshire Councils will combine with part of Northamptonshire County Council to form the new West Northamptonshire Council. It will provide all local authority services in the area, with the only exception being a new Children's Trust, delivering children's social care and targeted early help services across the county.

In the rest of Northamptonshire, Corby, Kettering, East Northamptonshire and Wellingborough Councils



will merge with the remainder of the County Council to become North Northamptonshire Council. This change is taking place so services are easier to access, can be delivered more efficiently, and offer better value for money.

As NPH will continue to manage your housing services, you will see no change to the support you receive. Your tenancy agreement will remain the same. There will also be no change to who you approach for support - the people you're familiar with will still be available on the same email addresses and phone numbers.

In previous issues of our resident newsletter, you'll have read about our extensive building programme to provide more social and affordable housing. This will continue at pace in the coming years and we could even see opportunities to provide additional homes across the wider West Northamptonshire area.

If you have any questions, please contact futurenorthants@northamptonshire.gov.uk. You can keep up to date with all the news for West Northamptonshire Council at futurenorthantswest.org, and we'll provide you with a more detailed update in the next issue of Your Voice.



Your views matter

In November, we sent out surveys to a sample of 2,000 of our residents.

We carried out a full survey in 2017 and committed to a few smaller surveys to gather views on recent service changes. Another full survey will be held again in 2021.

The surveys are being conducted independently on behalf of NPH by The Leadership Factor, an experienced research company.

If you're a tenant and you have received a survey from us, please do complete it, we'd love to hear about your views on recent service changes.

We will also be sending out our second Leaseholder Survey. This will be sent to all leaseholders, leaseholder tenants and managing agents. Again, please give us your

feedback, it helps us to continually improve your services.

If you have any questions or you would like to check that the survey you've received is genuine, please call us on **0300 330 7003**.



Your voice can make a difference

We recently reviewed the use of our community hubs and were proposing to close the hubs at Hinton Road and Blackberry Lane.

We talked to residents in the local area and listened to their feedback, which resulted in us changing our plans and deciding to keep Blackberry Lane open! Here's what one of our happy residents, Diane Dean had to say:

"I am delighted and relieved that you are listening to People's Power and are not

changing our Community Hub at Blackberry Lane. I am hoping that when life gets better the residents will realise the importance of having a place to go and meet others."

You can give us feedback at any time:

Online: www.nph.org.uk/give-us-feedback

By phone: **0300 3307003**



ARE YOU READY TO DO IT ONLINE?

CHECK YOUR RENT ACCOUNT ONLINE

SET UP A DIRECT DEBIT ONLINE

REPORT AND BOOK REPAIRS ONLINE

HEAD TO WWW.NPH.ORG.UK AND REGISTER NOW!



Christmas

Wordsearch



Thanks to NPH resident, Oscar Woodcock for this issue's Christmas wordsearch.

For your chance to win £20 in Love2Shop vouchers, can you find all the words that remind us of Christmas?

C	H	I	S	T	M	A	S	A	N	T	A	C	L	A
A	E	P	R	E	S	E	N	T	S	M	H	S	S	H
R	G	E	O	B	N	G	O	K	I	O	E	T	R	G
D	S	T	R	F	L	A	N	S	L	K	J	S	E	I
M	S	L	A	T	K	E	T	I	A	E	A	O	K	E
I	E	R	E	K	S	L	S	L	K	N	K	F	C	L
S	N	H	U	I	E	A	F	S	T	C	R	H	A	S
T	I	K	O	T	G	W	M	A	I	E	O	Y	R	E
L	P	C	O	L	O	H	C	T	E	N	E	T	C	N
E	P	E	A	N	I	L	B	D	S	K	G	A	S	I
T	A	R	S	R	A	D	N	E	R	I	D	S	L	P
O	H	I	E	U	D	I	A	U	L	S	R	E	E	P
N	E	K	S	S	E	S	T	Y	N	L	A	H	I	A
R	T	S	O	R	F	K	C	A	J	E	S	A	C	H
C	R	A	C	K	E	L	L	N	I	S	S	E	L	B

- BLESSINGS
- CARDS
- CHRISTMAS TREE
- CRACKERS
- HAPPINESS
- HOLIDAY
- JACK FROST
- MISTLETOE
- PRESENTS
- REINDEER
- SANTA CLAUS
- SLEIGH BELLS
- SNOWFLAKES
- STOCKINGS
- TURKEY



We would love to see what you've snapped on your camera or phone. Send one in, and we'll feature as many as we can in our next issue.

Email: voiceditor@nph.org.uk or WhatsApp to: **07342070887**



Thanks to Sharon Axon and Tabbie and Patrick Nganga for their lovely photos!

To enter, just email us a snap of your completed grid voiceditor@nph.org.uk or send it the traditional way to the address on page 2!

Congratulations to Mandy who won our wellbeing wordsearch!

