

Housing news for
tenants & leaseholders



NORTHAMPTON
PARTNERSHIP HOMES

voice

ISSUE 7: SPRING 2017



CHECK OUT
OUR NEW
TRAINING
PROGRAMME
INSIDE

Also...

PROUD TO BE A TENANT 03 FEED BELLIES NOT BINS 06 GARDEN COMPETITION 12



Welcome

“ If we had no winter the spring would not be so pleasant

Anne Bradstreet

Hello and welcome. I'm Oscar, NPH tenant and Chair of the Communications Service Improvement Panel. I hope you enjoy this edition of NPH Voice. Inside you will find the usual mix of tenant, community and NPH related news.

We have a report on the Tenant and Leaseholders' Conference from Tony, Chair of the Tenants' Panel, the talented Cilla graces the Proud Tenant feature and there is the opportunity to discover a few things about Rent Income Officer Vanessa in the Big Interview.

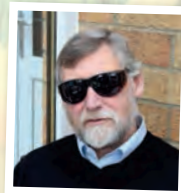
There is an article on Housing Support from a tenant who received help and advice that allowed them to recover from being in debt and become solvent again and there is another article in our series on wellbeing.

All you green fingered tenants and leaseholders are invited to enter the gardening competition; there are a number of categories so, even if you are restricted to just a couple of hanging baskets, you will still be in with a chance of winning a prize.

And we have the return of an old friend as the wordsearch is back by popular demand!

Best wishes

Oscar



At a glance...

Proud to be a Tenant 03

Meet this edition's Proud Tenant, Cilla

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Tackling fly-tipping in Blackthorn

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NPH Voice Issue 7 Spring 2017

Large print?

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

0300 330 7003



Reader Friendly

Meet Cilla Goodfellow – council tenant, entertainer and musician! Cilla's been an entertainer all her life.

In the 60's she featured in pantomimes – Aladdin, with Des O'Connor as the lead actor and Jack & the Beanstalk, with Bruce Montague. She's featured in film and TV - you can watch her in Ken Russell's 1964 comedy French Dressing and Cilla was the guest star of Bill Maynard's (of Dad's Army fame) TV show Homegrown.

Cilla was born in Harpenden in Luton and is a "full on" Hatters supporter... we'll forgive her, Cobblers fans! She grew up in Ramsgate, Kent and moved to Northampton in 1974.

During her career as an entertainer she became an air hostess for the military, jet setting across the globe. Cilla was also a Butlin's Red Coat entertainer for 5 years, where she worked with fellow Red Coat, Cliff Richard (he was recording his album "living doll" with the Shadows at the time). Cilla used to give out the ice skates alongside Cliff on the skating ring and they became good friends.

Nowadays, Cilla plays the accordion and keyboard, and hosts singalongs with residents at local residential homes and

day centres. "I host a musical bingo. Older people like a sing when they do bingo. It helps to get them involved".

On the service she receives from NPH, Cilla said "I have noticed improvements - the help they give to you. They take notice of what I have to say and do something about it."

You can find Cilla performing at Sainsbury's supermarket in Northampton throughout the year. In fact, you might have seen her. Were you there for Red Nose Day?

Cilla



The big interview

How long have you worked at NPH?

I've been a Rent Income Officer for NPH and NBC for 7 years. Before that I was a Tenancy Support Officer. A lot has changed in that time. Universal Credit has definitely had a big impact on our job. But we're adapting to make sure people on UC are supported.

What do you enjoy about your job?

I'm given a lot of responsibility which I like. Most of my work is from the office, taking phone calls but I also enjoy visiting tenants in their homes. Rent Income isn't always bad news. We're about managing rent payments. But we're also here to help. We look

in detail at many issues preventing people from paying their rent and offer support or referrals to people who can help. We want to keep people in their homes.

What do you get up to outside of NPH?

I like being outdoors whenever I can. I live with my 15 year old daughter and we spend a lot of time together. We visit a local farm that own horses and we ride them at the weekends. I go to the gym when I can and I also do a bit of yoga.

What are you most looking forward to now spring is here?

Evenings in winter are so dark so I'm really enjoying the lighter evenings.

What's your favourite place to visit?

I love to visit Anglesey in Wales. We go up there quite a bit on holiday, walking and pony riding. The coast line is beautiful.

What's your pet hate?

Grrrrrrr, definitely people who litter! I hate seeing rubbish littered across my street.

And of course, if you didn't work for NPH what would your dream job be?

The dream would be to live in Wales not too far from the beach. I'd work with horses and ride them every day on the beach.



Vanessa Lloyd
Rent Income
Officer

In memory of Lesley Ingram

It's with great sadness that we pay tribute to Lesley Ingram, a true community champion who passed away suddenly on 19th February. NBC's much-loved neighbourhood warden touched the lives of friends, colleagues and Northampton residents with her unwavering passion for the community.

Lesley was at the heart of so many community projects that helped people of all ages – the junior wardens scheme, which supported school children to learn about citizenship; residents groups to tackle local issues; campaigning for cleaner neighbourhoods

and working with a range of local partners to improve the lives of others. Lesley always had time for people and many of them remember the listening ear over a cup of tea that made more difference than she probably ever knew. Lesley will be greatly missed by all who knew her.

Our thoughts are with Lesley's family and friends.



Fly-tipping

One of the most recent projects Lesley worked on was NPH's fly-tipping campaign in Greatmeadow, Blackthorn. Housing Officer, Karl was so concerned about the amount of fly-tipping on his patch that he and Lesley organised a programme of activities focussed on cleaning up the area.

During October and November 2016, Karl and Lesley visited every household in Greatmeadow to listen to concerns about fly-tipping in the area,

record suggestions and offer general advice and support. Residents got involved in a clean-up day and Lesley and Karl were in the area every working day to target the people responsible for dumping the waste.

Since the project, residents have told us that they are better informed about how to dispose of rubbish, what they should be recycling and what to do if they see fly-tipping in the area.



If you have any information about fly-tipping in one of the areas we manage, please get in touch. NPH is committed to tackling this issue but we can't do it without you.



Fly-tipping is the illegal dumping of waste – it could be bin-bags, old furniture or electrical goods, anything that is dumped somewhere it shouldn't be! Help us keep your area tidy and report fly-tipping on 03003307003 or by email flytipping@northamptonpartnershiphomes.org.uk

If you don't ask, you don't get

Well done to tenants Margery and Anita. A busy bus stop on Overmead Road in Ecton Brook recently had a bus shelter built, all because they asked the council to find out what could be done.

Margery was waiting for a bus one day when she overheard neighbours complaining about the cold. When she talked to them about asking the council to build a bus shelter they said "nothing would be done about it".

Margery decided to do something. She phoned the council and met with her local Parish Council in Billing. The Parish Council asked Margery to prove the Bus

Shelter was needed. They then ran a survey asking people to say yes - I want the bus shelter, no – not for me thanks, or - I don't know, is it needed? The response was a clear yes!

Fast forward to today and Overmead Road now has a shelter, protecting people from wind and rain.

Margery says "If you don't ask, you don't get. They (the council) don't know what's wrong unless you tell them!"

We agree with Margery and Anita. NPH can't help with building bus shelters. We're here to provide a good housing service. But if we sometimes don't get it right, we need to know!

Want to give NPH feedback?

Tell us what you thought to our service. Go online to www.northamptonpartnershiphomes.org.uk/give-us-feedback or if you want to get more involved in your housing service, talk to us about joining one of NPH's tenant panels.

Info at: www.northamptonpartnershiphomes.org.uk/your-views

Anita and Margery enjoy the new bus shelter



Elsie's – Pay as You Feel Café

OPENING HOURS
TUESDAY: 10:00 – 14:00
WEDNESDAY: 10:00 – 14:00
THURSDAY: 10:00 – 14:00
FRIDAY: 09:30 – 11:30
SATURDAY: 10:00 – 11:30

Visit them at NPH's Market Street Community Hub, off Exeter Place.
[Facebook.com/TRJFPnorthampton](https://www.facebook.com/TRJFPnorthampton)

Welcome to a café with a difference. Elsie's Café serve delicious food prepared onsite from fresh ingredients. And you pay what you feel for your meal!

Elsie's Café is part of the Real Junk Food Project, an international network of cafés aiming to tackle food waste. Their motto: Feed Bellies, Not Bins.

The Café is run by volunteers who rescue, cook and serve food that would otherwise be dumped. When you eat there, your donation towards your meal allows Elsie's to carry on saving food and serving up tasty treats for everyone.

And we're proud to be working with them!

Elsie's have gone from strength to strength since winning the Carlsberg Food & Drink Awards last year for "Local Food Hero of the Year". So much so, they've found it hard to find space for all the food! NPH helped Elsie's find their new home at Market Street Community Hub in December. Their current home means they can rescue more food, feed more bellies and support the local community.

We tried the food ourselves and we can say it's delicious!

As well as eating home cooked food, Elsie's offer a "boutique table" where customers can shop and make a donation towards fruit, vegetables and bread to take home with them.

And if you think you can offer Elsie's Café payment in time, skills or a combination of the two, they're always looking for helpers.

Kelly, the Volunteers Manager at Elsie's Café said:

"We're trying to break the stigma around food waste and pay as you feel cafes. We want to show that we're catering for everybody and that everyone is welcome to eat at Elsie's".

"It's a common view that people think we're taking food from bins, but we're not! We're saving waste food that otherwise would be placed in bins".

"Volunteers are really important to us. I was a customer myself at the Café, before I decided to volunteer with Elsie's. We have lots of different volunteers who get involved. Young people from Olympus Care Services, NPH tenants and local people".

Emma Whyte



If you like what you see at Elsie's why not try Northampton's newest branch of the real junk food project, Just Enough?

Founder and NPH tenant Emma Whyte, a loyal Elsie's customer, is appalled by the amount of food that goes to waste and decided to do something about it:

"I know that there are so many people out there who can't afford to eat healthily, while tonnes of food is being wasted every day. It's a real passion of mine and I can't wait to start feeding bellies not bins!"

Just Enough opens on 3rd April and will be dishing up delicious meals every Monday from 10:00 – 14:00 at James Lewis Court Community Hub.

Sheena & the team cooking lunch at Elsie's



First for Wellbeing: supporting Northamptonshire to a healthier, happier life

First for Wellbeing is fast becoming the new 'go-to' place for wellbeing advice and support in Northamptonshire.

Launched in April 2016, the not-for-profit organisation has supported more than 2400 local people through its free wellbeing service.

One of the great things about the service is that advisors work with people on a one-to-one basis, so the advice is really focussed on the individual. After an informal meeting to find out which areas of wellbeing could be improved, advisors can make referrals for more specialist services such as weight management; help to stop smoking; emotional and social wellbeing and financial and housing support.

We spoke to one of our tenants, William Brooker, who NPH introduced to First for Wellbeing for extra support when he found out his application for Personal Independent Payments (P.I.P) had been refused.

William met his advisor, Linda who told us: "William was highly stressed and anxious when I first met with him - he had lost his Disability Living Allowance and had been refused P.I.P. William was a bit all over the place in terms of his physical and emotional health".

"We made some referrals to kick things off - one to Community Law

Service, for help with William's benefits and to appeal his application for PIP. William was also given links to information and advice on how to appeal."

"William's physical and emotional health was also a concern, so we referred him to Weight Watchers for a free programme to start his way on to a healthy lifestyle, and directed him to Learn2B for some relaxation and anxiety group support.

William is now well on his way to getting his financial situation in order, he is much more involved in his community and looks forward to what else the future holds for him.

Just four months after his very first appointment, William said he felt "like a new person".

"I first heard about First for Wellbeing through Northampton Partnership Homes, and the information given to me was really helpful," he said.

"My advisor, Linda, was very friendly and understanding and helped me to join Weight Watchers. I also got information on how to be more confident and socially active in my day-to-day life."

The most important thing, William explains, is that he has gained his independence back through volunteering, socialising and attending a number of courses and groups.

"My experience with First for Wellbeing has been really great and helped me change my life for the better," he said.

"I am more confident, calmer and generally feel like a new person - a busy person! Even my family can't believe the changes," he said.

"I hope to live a much healthier, stress-free, active lifestyle. I no longer need the support of First for Wellbeing but I know where to find them if I do."

Find out more or take your free wellbeing assessment today: visit **www.firstforwellbeing.co.uk**, email **info@firstforwellbeing.co.uk** or call **0300 126 5000**.



First for Wellbeing
SUPPORTING YOU TO TAKE CHARGE OF YOUR LIFE

William Brooker

Tel: 0300 330 7003 Email: voiceditor@northamptonpartnershiphomes.org.uk

Care & Repair Northamptonshire

Keeping Homes, Warm, Safe and Secure

Care & Repair can help with those extra jobs around the home. For example:

- Putting up curtain rails and blinds, replacing clothes lines and rotary driers, flat pack furniture assembly
- Replacement locks, keys, door knockers, bells and security chains, door handles and latches

- Replacement light bulbs or fluorescent tubes, re-setting trip switches, testing and replacing battery smoke detectors
- Plumbing works including plumbing in washing machines and dishwashers
- Replacing toilet seats, flush chains, plugs and chains in baths and sinks
- Electrics including installation of cookers
- Carpentry works including adjusting doors
- Child safety measures

- Gardening and maintaining garden paths

Care & Repair charge affordable rates. A quote for the cost of works is always given prior to any works going ahead.

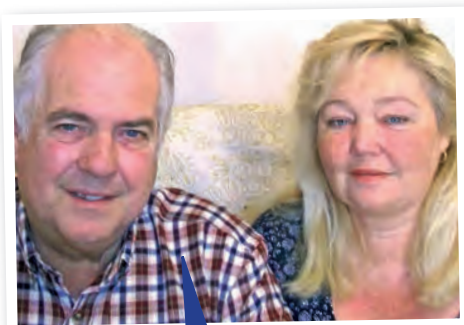
You can call Care & Repair on **01604 782250** or email **office@careandrepairnorthamptonshire.org**.



Keep an eye on NPH Services. Join the Scrutiny Panel.



By joining Mike, Gail and Zubeda you will get to make sure NPH's services work for all tenants and leaseholders and provide value for money.



We wanted to give back to NPH as a thanks for all they did for us when we were in need.

Tenants, Mike & Gail

I joined the Scrutiny Panel to monitor NPH and make sure tenants receive a good service, and to suggest ways to make improvements.

Tenant, Zubeda



Think you're up for the challenge?

Contact NPH's Customer Engagement Team on **01604 837836** or email: **participation@northamptonpartnershiphomes.org.uk**

Housing Support

Here to help maintain tenancies



“I’d never gone to any person to ask for help before. I’d become drugs dependent. I had people at home taking advantage of me. I stopped opening the door, stopped paying my rent, and stopped answering my phone. I just shut myself away and ignored everything.”

This is a true story about a tenant introduced to NPH’s Housing Support service after they fell into a lot of debt.

“I was scared of where my life was going. Someone from NPH came to visit me but I wouldn’t let them in. I’ve had a bad experience of people in authority. I thought I may lose my home. They [the housing support officer] talked to me from outside the door about offering support, not chasing finance and debts. I think that’s when I thought they were here to help me”.

Listening to me...

“I said to them that I’d lost my job, had no income. I was in an abusive relationship and that I was dependent on drugs. I’d tried help before, but it failed as I was always judged. But, this was different. They listened to me.”

“I had piles of unpaid bills and I didn’t know where to pick up and start again. They helped me go through this all. The Support Officer explained about going to court and they actually came with me and convinced the court not to take legal action”.

Helping me move on...

“They contacted my family who I had lost touch with. I spoke to my Mum about my past. My situation really scared her! She convinced me to go to rehab. I can say it was the best experience of my life”.

“While I was away they found me a safe place to live and helped me apply for benefits. Not dealing with everything on my own made it easier”.

My rent account is now in credit. It’s so nice not to worry now. I’m looking forward to getting the new place painted and my life back! I’ve started to go to college. When I’m finished I hope to show others the damage drugs can do to people and support those who need it”.

“What the Housing Support Team did for me was absolutely brilliant. My life is now a lot more manageable”.

NPH’s Housing Support Team offer advice and support to help people stay in their homes. If you’re worried about what to do next you can contact them on **01604 838462** or email **rehousingsupport@northamptonpartnershiphomes.org.uk**

NPH Conference feedback

On Thursday 12 January, NPH held their annual Tenant and Leaseholder Conference at the Park Inn. The event also marked NPH's second anniversary.

The conference looked at what NPH has been doing in 2016 and also looked ahead at plans for 2017.

As the Chair of the Tenants' Panel, I want to make sure NPH get it right for all tenants and leaseholders. Last year NPH spent about £32 million refurbishing council homes. You can see the difference this has made in Abbey Street in St James, Far Cotton, Delapre and Broadmead Avenue in Eastfield.

We heard from David Latham, the Chair of NPH's Board as well as Cllr Jonathan Nunn, the leader of Northampton Borough Council, who spoke about the need across Northampton to build more council housing.

After a bit of lunch it was time for tenants and leaseholders to choose a series of workshops. These included sessions about doing grounds maintenance differently, how tenants can make a difference in the community and wellbeing.

Everyone was able to put forward ideas on how they think things could be done better; ideas that can be taken on board by NPH and put into practice.

The feedback I received from the tenants who attended was good. It was well organised. The food was decent.



The stalls were interesting and beneficial. Best of all, tenants got involved and had a say, which is just the sort of conference we want to see!

Tony

Chair of the Tenants' Panel

Introducing Keepmoat

Our long term maintenance partners.

At January's Conference we announced that NPH will be working with Keepmoat on a long term basis to continue maintaining and refurbishing council homes. Keepmoat are an award winning Regeneration Company. They will be working with NPH over the next ten years to maintain homes and neighbourhoods.

Keepmoat are passionate about employing local people and working with Northampton's residents. Watch this space for some of the community projects they'll be bringing to Northampton.

Keepmoat will carry on improving the inside and outside of homes and community spaces.

To find out more about planned works near you, head to: www.northamptonpartnershiphomes.org.uk/planned-works



Oscar's Wordsearch

S	E	B	B	A	B	B	O	A	V	E	R	B	B	A
B	U	B	B	R	E	B	B	U	L	D	N	A	L	M
B	O	L	D	E	M	R	M	D	E	B	O	C	A	U
E	G	B	E	G	T	H	R	O	B	B	E	D	B	G
D	E	I	B	I	A	O	R	B	B	O	H	I	B	E
B	U	T	B	E	L	B	B	A	U	Q	S	Q	H	L
L	F	R	A	B	D	B	N	E	B	H	O	D	S	B
B	C	I	L	I	E	Y	G	I	A	B	E	V	I	B
B	S	O	B	B	V	A	S	B	B	M	I	F	R	U
A	T	I	B	B	B	E	B	S	O	B	B	T	E	A
U	U	E	U	B	E	Y	R	B	E	V	O	L	B	B
Q	D	B	I	F	L	D	B	B	L	B	B	B	B	L
S	H	R	M	U	G	E	L	B	B	U	B	B	I	B
E	C	V	I	E	D	O	D	A	Q	A	E	A	G	O
Y	B	B	A	H	L	A	N	D	L	U	B	B	E	C

**Two B or not
Two Be.**

Can you find the
hidden words?

- ☐ ABBESS
- ☐ ABBOT
- ☐ ABBREVIATE
- ☐ BLABBED
- ☐ BOBBED
- ☐ BOBBIN
- ☐ BUBBLEGUM
- ☐ COBBLED
- ☐ CRIBBAGE
- ☐ DEMOBBED
- ☐ EBBED
- ☐ FIBBED
- ☐ GIBBERISH
- ☐ HOBBY
- ☐ LANDLUBBER
- ☐ RABBIT
- ☐ SHABBY
- ☐ SQUABBLE
- ☐ THROBBED

Trilogy Leisure Events on in spring



For the kids:

Coming up at the Racecourse Park on the 4 - 6 April 12:30-3:00pm Street Sports Sessions. From football to basketball and more.... These are free to enter and on all year round! For more information visit facebook.com/NorthamptonStreetFootball

Live near Duston? Walking Sports Sessions at Duston Sports Centre.

Walking Netball - Walking Netball is a slower version of the game; it is netball, but at a walking pace. The game has been designed so that anyone can play it regardless of age or fitness level.

Walking Football - If you thought your football career was over, think again! Walking Football is a slower paced version

of the game, aimed at people aged over 50. Smaller pitches and plenty of breaks ensure participants enjoy a safe and enjoyable return to football. The slower pace doesn't detract from the competition though – it's much more than a stroll in the park!

Free to members, £3.00 to leisure card holders and £3.50 for non-members.

For more information or to book call Trilogy on 01604 838333.

Tel: 0300 330 7003 Email: voiceeditor@northamptonpartnershiphomes.org.uk

Garden Competition 2017

Love gardening? Then we want you!
Our Garden Competition is now open for entries

We are running our first garden competition and have a range of categories to enter.

The competition is open to all tenants, leaseholders and household members.

Deadline for entries Thursday 15 June 2017.

Judging will take place on week commencing 10 July.

Prizes for the winner of each category.

Categories include:

- **Best Garden**
- **Best Communal Garden**
- **Best Container Garden (indoor or outdoor)**
- **Best young gardener (Under 16s)**
- **Best fruit and veg patch**
- **Most Environmentally Friendly Garden**

How to enter

 Pick up an entry form at your local community hub or the Guildhall One Stop Shop

 Go online at www.northamptonpartnershiphomes.org.uk

 Or give NPH's Customer Engagement Team a call on **01604 837836**.

A few words from our judge, Johnnie Amos - BBC Radio Northampton's gardening presenter



"I'm really excited about judging the first ever NPH garden competition and getting to meet all the green-fingered tenants and leaseholders out there. Whether you've nurtured a container on your kitchen window-sill or tended a flourishing vegetable patch – I want to see it! Happy Gardening."

