

Housing news for
tenants & leaseholders



NORTHAMPTON
PARTNERSHIP HOMES

voice

ISSUE 10: SPRING 2018

SCARLETWELL COURT



CHECK OUT
OUR NEW
TRAINING
PROGRAMME
INSIDE

Also...

.....
GROUNDS MAINTENANCE

5

HAPPY TO HELP

10

GARDEN COMPETITION

12
.....



Welcome

It's officially spring. I'm looking forward to hanging up my scarf and hat and enjoying some brighter weather.

In this issue, we're talking to Continental Landscapes - NPH's new Grounds Maintenance Contractor. Find out about who they are and what they'll be doing to keep NPH managed blocks tidy across Northampton. You can also read about families moving into new homes in Spring Boroughs, and ambitious plans to build 1000 new homes.

On Tuesday 24th April join us at NPH's Tenants and Leaseholders Conference. There's still time to reserve a seat so get in contact.

With summer in mind, NPH's annual garden competition is back and entries are now open!

As always, thank you to all tenants who contributed towards this issue.

If you have any ideas for items that you would like to see in future editions then let us know. We'd love to hear them.

Enjoy the read!

Thanks, Oscar

Tenant Chair of NPH's Communications Service Improvement Panel.



At a glance...

In your Neighbourhood

3

A new playground opens in Ryehill.

The Big Interview

5

We meet Alan from Continental Landscapes, NPH's new Grounds Maintenance Contractor.

Spring Boroughs Homes

6

Families move in to new homes in Spring Boroughs.

Your Housing Officers

8

Meet your Housing Officer and find out how they can help.

Join NPH's Board

11

We are looking for new tenants to join our Board.



NORTHAMPTON
PARTNERSHIP HOMES

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02

NPH Voice Issue 10 Spring 2018

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0300 330 7003



Reader Friendly

In your Neighbourhood

Knit, Crochet and Natter in Arlbury Road, Blackthorn

Meet Rosemary Loveday, the organiser of “Knit, Crochet and Natter”. She started the group to give people an opportunity to get out and meet new friends. Rosemary loves to see more people getting involved and makes sure that new members are made to feel welcome.

The group now has over 20+ members who share ideas, learn new skills but most of all come together to have a good old natter!



“The group gives people a chance to come here, have a natter with friends, rather than being sat by themselves in their four walls”

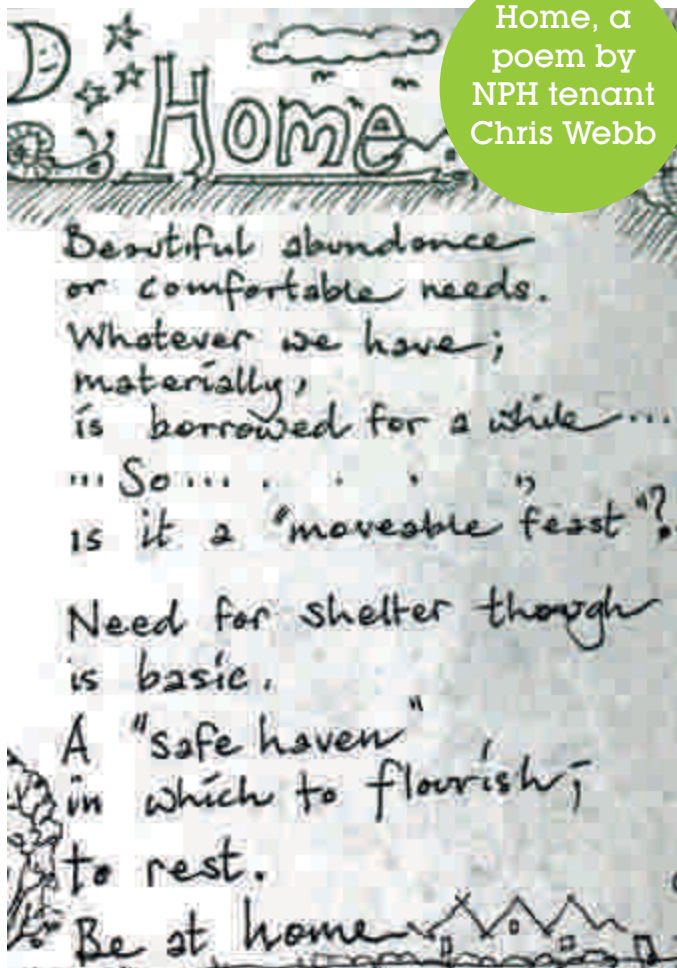
New playground for families in Ryehill



A new play park bringing families together on Tresham Green in Ryehill.

“It’s been so lovely. It’s always busy, the children are so grateful to have it. I think it’s rekindled the sense of community.”

Karen Kelly (mother of 5).

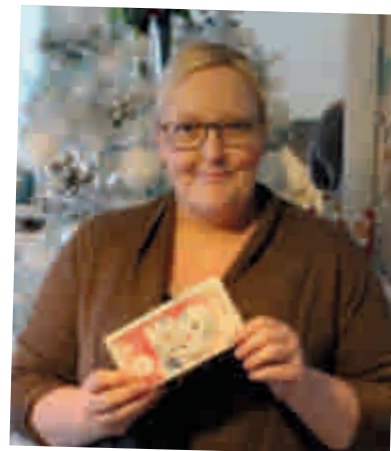


Home, a poem by NPH tenant Chris Webb

Jemma is a winner!

Jemma from Thorplands was over the moon when we delivered £500 worth of Love2Shop vouchers just before Christmas!

All tenants who had an up to date rent account on 4th December 2017 were entered into a prize draw and Jemma was the lucky winner. She didn't think it was real at first: “I can't believe it, I never win anything, and all I did was pay my rent!”



We'd love to hear about what is going on in your neighbourhood.

Get in touch with us at
voiceeditor@northamptonpartnershiphomes.org.uk

Repairs you are responsible for

Keeping your home in good condition is a joint effort between NPH and you.

Lots of tenants ask NPH who is responsible for what when it comes to repairs? So, we wanted to make this clear and help you to avoid extra charges.

You are responsible for:

- Keeping the inside of your home clean and in good condition
- Repairing things that have been damaged
- Making sure that when repairs are needed through wear and tear you let us know as soon as possible
- Internal decoration
- Keeping your garden tidy
- Your own belongings, including keys

If you ask us to carry out any repair you are responsible for, such as damage to your home, we will charge you. This is called a recharge.

Check out the following tips for avoiding recharges.

- Ask a friend or relative to keep a spare set of keys for you – lock changes cost over £80 and from the 31st April we will be asking for payment up front before we make an appointment.
- Beware of DIY - botched jobs or alterations we haven't authorised could be expensive!
- Don't pretend your repair is an emergency to get it done quicker.
- If you're moving out, make sure you leave the property empty, clean and tidy.
- Take out some home insurance – we can put you in touch with a company who offer low cost insurance to NPH tenants and leaseholders www.crystal-insurance.co.uk



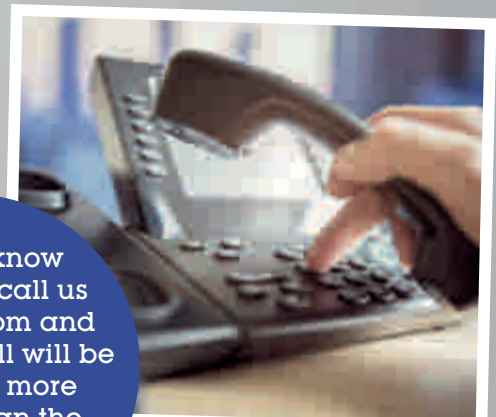
We also get lots of calls from tenants asking for repairs that we just don't do. These calls clog up the phone lines and mean that customers with genuine urgent repairs are waiting longer.

You can find out more about the type of repairs you are responsible for at www.northamptonpartnershiphomes.org.uk/report-repair



If you need repairs to your gas boiler, you can call PH Jones, NPH's gas contractor directly on 01604 588 811 to book your appointment.

Did you know that if you call us between 2pm and 4pm your call will be answered more quickly than the earlier part of the day?



Meet our new grounds maintenance contractor...

My name's Alan Greenwood, I'm a Contract Supervisor for Continental Landscapes.

Hi Alan. Welcome to NPH Voice.

Who are Continental Landscapes & what will you be doing?

We're a Grounds Maintenance specialist. Our work includes grass cutting, shrub and plant bed maintenance, hedge cutting, and tree maintenance. We have 30 branches across the UK and work with lots of social housing residents up and down the country.

We officially start work for NPH in June. You might see us before then if there are urgent jobs that can't wait. If you do, we'd love to meet you. Make sure you come and say hello!

How did you come to work for Continental Landscapes?

I was working in retail when I first started out. That wasn't for me! I wanted a job outdoors. I've now been doing grounds maintenance for 6 years. When this job came up, I knew I had to go for it.

What is your favourite part of the job?

I love talking to residents, making a difference to the area and seeing them happy with the work we've done. I hate to leave a job unfinished. If the work isn't good enough for my garden at home, then it isn't good enough for residents either.

What do you enjoy outside of work?

I love the outdoors, so even when I'm not working you'll probably find me outside. Fishing is my favourite hobby. I remember catching a 30lb fish once. It's all catch and return fishing, so I always return the fish to water after it has been caught.



CONTINENTAL LANDSCAPES LTD

A bit more about Continental Landscapes?

- An award winning Grounds Maintenance and Landscaping company
- They'll be working with NPH from June 2018
- Continental will be tidying and maintaining NPH's:
 - Communal paths
 - Shrubs
 - Hedges
 - Lawns
 - Trees
- They'll also be working closely with the Council's new grounds maintenance contractor.

NPH would like to thank all tenants who got involved in choosing Continental as your grounds maintenance contractor!

Welcome to your new home!

Families are moving in to brand new homes on Scarletwell Court and Lower Bath Court in Spring Boroughs this month.

We'd like to say a big welcome!

The three bed homes are part of a development of 34 new Council homes being built across Spring Boroughs.

The homes have been offered to families living in Spring Boroughs who are most in need of housing.

If you're in the area, check out the developments on Little Cross Street and Althorp Street which will be ready later this year.



View of the Planned Investment SIP

Bob Russell, Tenant and Chair of NPH's Planned Investment Service Improvement Panel said:



“

I think these homes are very positive for Northampton. They look nice, and the fact they have three bedrooms is very important to people.

Their location is good; not far from the train station - so there are really good transport links.

”



“

I'd lived in my flat for 12 years and never thought I'd be able to move. My daughter goes to the school nearby. The kids are so excited to be moving. They've never had a garden to play in before. This is a big thing for us!

”

Charlene, NPH tenant



More new homes on the way...

We have exciting plans to build more homes in Northampton.

Northampton Borough Council's Cabinet met in February and approved plans to build 1 000 new homes in the next 10 years across Northampton.

NPH is already building a number of new affordable homes across Northampton. But we want to offer more homes to people waiting on the housing register and in need of housing.

We will be working in partnership with the Council to make this happen. If you would like to find out more, head to www.northamptonpartnershiphomes.org.uk/building-1000-new-homes

We can't wait to tell you more later this year.

Meet your Housing Officer

NPH's Housing Officers can help with queries about your tenancy. You can talk to them about your home and neighbourhood, and join them on walkabouts of your area.

For more information visit: www.northamptonpartnershiphomes.org.uk/your-housing-officer

Housing Officers:

Natalie Simmons



Great Billing, Lings,
Little Billing, Lumbertubs,
Overstone Lodge, Southfields

Ellie Holmes



Arbury Road, Blackthorn,
Rectory Farm, Woodfield

David Balsom



Duston, Ryehill, Semilong

Alexis Newlin



Eastfield, Thorplands,
Thorplands Brook

Emma Hall



Billing Road, Great Houghton,
Town Centre, Weston Favell

Karl Owen



Abington, Cherry Orchard,
Cottarville, Headlands,
Kingsley, Lakeview

Tracey Pike



Kingsthorpe

Pippa Grainger



Kingsthorpe Hollow,
St James, Sunnyside

Kathryn Lomas



Dallington, Kingsheath,
Paget House

Liz Percival



Spencer, Spring Boroughs

Nick Rose



Bellinge, Ecton Brook,
Goldings, Standens Barn

Talk to your Housing Officer about:

- Changes to your tenancy
- Home visits
- Downsizing
- Flytipping
- Extra help at home
- Estate Walkabouts and Block Inspections

We're currently recruiting a new Housing Officer in Briar Hill, Camp Hill, Collingtree, Far Cotton, Delapre, Hardingstone, Overslade and Wootton

Check out our website for more information.

A day in the life of a Housing Officer

We caught up with Kathryn, Housing Officer for Dallington, Kingsheath and Paget House to find out a typical day for a NPH Housing Officer...

“**No day is the same**”

“I usually start work around 8am. I'll head to the office in the morning to catch up on phone calls from the previous day. I will check my calendar and book appointments with tenants for the week ahead.

I visit new tenants who have just moved in to see how things are going. If more help is needed, I can also offer advice and put residents in touch with NPH's Housing Support Team or to a charity we work with, to get a little extra help.

I'm out on patch a lot of the time. I meet a lot of people here while I'm walking in my areas. I'll check for flytipping, making sure it is investigated and reported. Housing Officers also visit all blocks of flats in their areas to check for breaches of fire safety and report any repair issues in communal areas.

During the week, I'll spend half a day in the Guildhall's contact centre, talking to tenants and helping the call centre staff with queries over the phone. If you make contact, it doesn't matter who your Housing Officer is for the area, we can all assist.

I work alongside partner agencies meeting regularly with them - the local school, neighbourhood policing team and the NBC Neighbourhood warden. We all attend local community events in the area.

At the end of the working day I will be typing up my case notes, finalising documentation, and diarising tenant information.

The role of Housing officer is demanding but also very rewarding!”





Volunteers needed in your area – are you “Happy to Help”?

When NPH was set up, we wanted to make sure that tenants and leaseholders were at the heart of what we do. One of the ways we do this is by inviting you to check over the way we do things and getting you involved in the decisions we need to make.

We also know that many of you are passionate about your communities and want to make a difference. Whether that's helping your neighbours, running community groups, organising events or anything else that helps your neighbourhood.

With that in mind, we've put our thinking caps on and come up with a new way to invest in communities - **Happy to Help**. Happy to Help is the name of a new not-for-profit organisation that will run in partnership with tenants and leaseholders for the benefit of communities across Northampton.

Happy to Help will take care of some of the things that many of you have told us you need help with - garden, DIY and decorating for a start. We will provide materials and support for anyone who would like to volunteer with Happy to Help in their neighbourhood.

Are you handy with a paintbrush? Can you put up a few shelves? Are you great at admin and organising? Maybe you would be interested in joining the Happy to Help Board? Even if it is none of the above but you have loads of enthusiasm, get in touch to find out more.

Call or text Cam Whyld on **07920 782756** or email happytohelp@northamptonpartnershiphomes.org.uk

Alternatively, come along to the NPH Tenants & Leaseholders Conference on **Tuesday, 24th April**. Call our customer engagement team on **01604 837836** to book your place.

Get online

Did you know that you can view your rent statement, set up a direct debit and change your personal details online? Just make sure you have your tenancy reference number to hand and head to the Your NPH tab on our website.

If you still use Northampton Borough Council's Citizens Account to view your rent statement, you won't be able to do this for much longer. The service will be closed in April.

The good news is that you can access your housing info from Your NPH on our website!



Whole home, whole neighbourhood



“Think it's brilliant.
The plans are
good. The area
needs it!”

Look out for our Planned Investment Team in Thorplands. They've got big plans for homes in the area...

Thorplands is NPH's next area for Major Improvement Works

You've seen the works in Spring Boroughs and Kings Heath. Now it's time for Thorplands.

What are NPH's Planned Investment Team planning for Thorplands?

- Refurbish the outside of flats and houses - including new cladding and windows;
- Refurbish garages;
- Improve car parking;
- Improve waste and recycling disposal;
- Create new homes and shops at the empty Tanners Pub;
- Create landscaped gardens with better access, new sheds and security.

There's still time to have a say in these plans!

Contact our planned investment team at:

plannedinvestment@northamptonpartnershiphomes.org.uk

Visit: **www.northamptonpartnershiphomes.org.uk/planned-works**

We've been really pleased about all the feedback we have received from residents so far.

Your NPH Board is recruiting!

Would you like to be a part of a team that influences NPH's future plans? We are looking for new tenants to join our Board.

Don't worry, we will give you all the training and support you need to become a valued member of our Board. Your views as a tenant will influence the way we do things and the decisions we make.

To apply, contact NPH's Governance Team on **01604 837503** or email: **governance@northamptonpartnershiphomes.org.uk**

Don't be put off by filling in forms, we can give you all the support you need to show off your skills.

NPH's Garden Competition 2018

Whether you're a keen gardener or just love your plants and flowers, you should enter NPH's Garden Competition!

It couldn't be easier to apply. Pick your category and contact us.

You can:

- o Register online at www.northamptonpartnershiphomes.org.uk/garden-competition;
- o Call NPH's Customer Engagement Team on **01604 837836**;
- o Talk to your Housing Officer;
- o Pick up an entry form at your local community hub or the Guildhall One Stop Shop;
- o Or write to us at: NPH's Garden Competition, Northampton Partnership Homes, Westbridge Depot, 9-13 St James Mill Road, Northampton, NN5 5JW.

This year's categories include:

1. Best Garden
2. Best Small Garden
3. Best Indoor Garden
4. Most Sustainable Garden (including Fruit and Veg)
5. Best Community Garden
6. Best Young Gardener (Under 16s)

Don't be put off if you don't know which category to enter, we'll help.

The competition is open to all NPH tenants, leaseholders and household members. Deadline for entries is **Friday 15th June**. Each person who wins will receive a prize. There will also be a little something to say thank you for everyone who enters.

**Entries
now open.**

Find the "App"

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- ☐ APPLICABLE
- ☐ APPLICANT
- ☐ APPOINT
- ☐ APPRAISAL
- ☐ APPRECIATE
- ☐ APPROVE
- ☐ APPROXIMATELY

Win £20 in Love 2 Shop Vouchers.

Best of luck with this challenging 'App' related wordsearch put together by Oscar. And congratulations to the Winter word search winner, A Phillimore!

To be in with a chance of winning, send your completed wordsearch to NPH by 23 April 2018. You can send your wordsearch by post, See page 2 for NPH's contact details, email a photo of your wordsearch to the Voice Editors, or drop the wordsearch off when you next visit the Guildhall One Stop Shop.