

Housing news for  
tenants & leaseholders



NORTHAMPTON  
PARTNERSHIP HOMES

# voice

ISSUE 15: WINTER 2019

Season's  
greetings  
from all  
at NPH

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# Welcome

## Welcome to the winter issue of NPH voice!

Put the kettle on, get cosy and take a little break while you find out what's been going on at NPH. In this issue, you will find out how many new homes we're building all over Northampton and get to see the winning entries from our primary school Centenary competition. We're also proud to tell you about our newly accredited anti-social behaviour team and their mediation service. There's lots more too, we hope you enjoy the read. If you have a story to share with us, please get in touch - we'd love to hear from you.

Finally, we would like to wish you a wonderful festive season and all the best for 2020!

### Do you take pride in where you live?

Would you like to get more involved in your own area?

We have a team of amazing Community Connectors to help us take care of our neighbourhoods, but we're always looking for more volunteers to help. You could manage a notice board in your building, report fly-tipping, give us feedback on how our grounds maintenance and cleaning contracts are performing or organise community events where you live.

**If you fancy giving it a go, please get in touch**  
**[getinvolved@nph.org.uk](mailto:getinvolved@nph.org.uk)**



NORTHAMPTON  
PARTNERSHIP HOMES

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## Large print?

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

**0300 330 7003**



**Reader Friendly**

# Notice board

## BE SCAM AWARE

We've had reports of people knocking on doors claiming to be from the Ministry of Council Housing. This is not an organisation that exists and the caller is not connected to NPH. The caller has been asking questions about residents' homes and is trying to make arrangements for a "colleague" to return to carry out a survey.

All of our staff and contractors will always carry identification and they will show you if you ask. If you are unsure, do not let them in. If you are approached by anyone falsely claiming to be from NPH or Northampton Borough Council, please call us to report on **0300 330 7003**.

## Bin collections

Your bin collections may change over the Christmas period. You can check your bin collections online at **[www.northampton.gov.uk/info/200084/bins-waste-and-recycling](http://www.northampton.gov.uk/info/200084/bins-waste-and-recycling)**. Please do not leave your bins or rubbish out for collection on the wrong days, it can attract rats and other vermin.



## We're changing the way we start new tenancies

Previously, our tenancies have always started on a Monday. From 21st November 2019, tenancies can start on any day of the week. Your rent payment will be taken the day after you sign up for your new tenancy. This will give more flexibility for new tenants and mean that our properties aren't empty for long.

## Electrical Safety

We've been made aware that several tenants have tampered with their mains electrical equipment. This is extremely dangerous to both themselves, their neighbours and family. If we find that you have diverted your electricity, you could face a heavy fine or possible police charges.

## Christmas opening hours

Date	Guildhall	One Stop Shop
➤ Monday 23rd December	Closes 6pm	Closes 5pm
➤ Tuesday 24th December	Closes 5pm	Closes 4pm
➤ Wednesday 25th December	Closed	Closed
➤ Thursday 26th December	Closed	Closed
➤ Friday 27th December	Closed	Closed
➤ Saturday 28th December	Open as normal	Closed
➤ Monday 30th December	Closes 6pm	Closes 5pm
➤ Tuesday 31st December	Closes 5pm	Closes 4pm
➤ Wednesday 1st January	Closed	Closed
➤ Thursday 2nd January	Open as normal	Open as normal



# Handbags and Gladrags

The Handbags and Gladrags craft group meets every Monday at Cardigan Close Community Hub for crafting and a chat. They've recently made 90 memory blankets for the Children are Butterflies charity and 20 quilts for residents at Cynthia Spencer Hospice.

Members of the group all have different skills, and between them make friendship bracelets, cushions, cards, wreaths, keyrings, purses, headbands and even dog coats. They then sell their creations to raise money for charity.

This friendly group is always looking for new members. So, whether you're already crafty or would like to learn new craft skills, you will get a very warm welcome. They meet on Monday afternoons from 13:00 to 16:30 at Cardigan Close hub. Pop along for your first free taster session, then if you like it, it's only £1 per week to take part.



# Free activities

## for residents in Thorplands

Back in June, Thorplands Residents Association was awarded a grant from Northants Community Foundation to support young people and combat older persons' social isolation. Volunteers couldn't wait to get started and planned some activities in the summer holidays.

Young people had the chance to take part in cooking lessons, where they prepared and cooked a meal and dessert, which they shared with older people in the area. The children loved the lessons, and the residents who shared the meals with them said the food was delicious.



The Residents Association has also provided street dance sessions and is now planning football training for young people. There is even funding to run adult education sessions and Sarah Balkham, who chairs the association, is looking for feedback from residents on what kind of classes they would find useful. Join the Thorplands Residents Association Facebook group to share your ideas and find out more about what they're up to!



### Battle gamers

Is table top gaming your thing? If so, Adam Sheldrick and his fellow Battle Gamers would love to hear from you. They meet at Leicester Street Community Hub every Monday and Tuesday from 16:00 - 22:00. Dungeons and Dragons is a regular feature, but you can also bring your own favourite games with you to play with the group. It's a lot of fun for only £1 per week and under 10's go free!

### Pleydell Road Allotment Association

If you love growing food and are running out of space at home, this could be the news you've been waiting for! There are plots available at Pleydell Road. Mike Taylor, secretary of the Pleydell Road Allotment Association told us: "We all get together a few times a year for social activities and we run a shop at the allotments too. There's a real community spirit here and we help each other out."

If you would like to find out more, you can contact Mike directly on 07746 616131 or by email [fubsadamr@gmail.com](mailto:fubsadamr@gmail.com)





# Have your say

Our Residents Forum meets every couple of months and is open to any NPH tenant or leaseholder.

At each meeting there are updates from the main NPH board and the board of our social enterprise, Happy to Help CIC. There is also a presentation from a NPH service area and a speaker from another organisation. Recent guests included Citizens Advice and Northamptonshire Police. If you come along to the forum, you also get to find out more about how we've been involving tenants and leaseholders in what we do at NPH.

At the next meeting, residents will be discussing how they would like their meetings to be held. Why not come along and be part of the conversation? It's on Monday 20th January 2020 from 10:00 until 12:00 at Far Cotton Recreational Centre, NN4 8LG.

Please contact us on **01604 837836** or email us at **[getinvolved@nph.org.uk](mailto:getinvolved@nph.org.uk)** for more information.

# Happy to Help update



Our social enterprise is living up to its name and has been helping community groups all over Northampton to make a difference. We are always keen to do more and would love to hear from you if you are involved in a project that benefits local communities. You may just have an idea at this stage and that's fine too. We can help you get it started!

Here are just a few of the projects we've supported so far:

- Coach costs for an outing for older people;
- A residents' association newsletter;
- Membership costs to improve access to the County Toy Library;
- Running costs of an autism support group;
- Funding for a community group's annual award event;
- Gardening equipment for the Friends of Victoria Park;
- A lawnmower for a community garden; and
- Youth group refreshment costs.



You can apply online at [www.nph.org.uk/happy-help-cic](http://www.nph.org.uk/happy-help-cic) or contact our friendly team on **01604 837836**. We can make grants of up to £250 or purchase items on behalf of the group or project. We also offer lots of support and advice if this is all new to you.

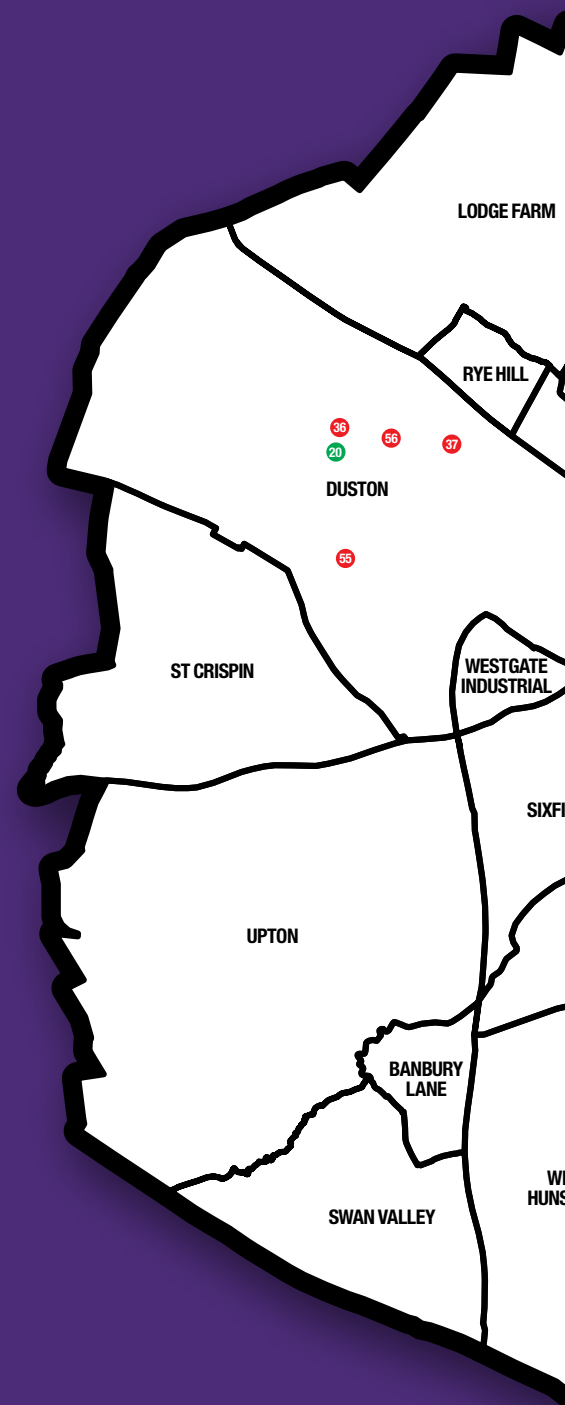
**We can't wait to hear from you.**

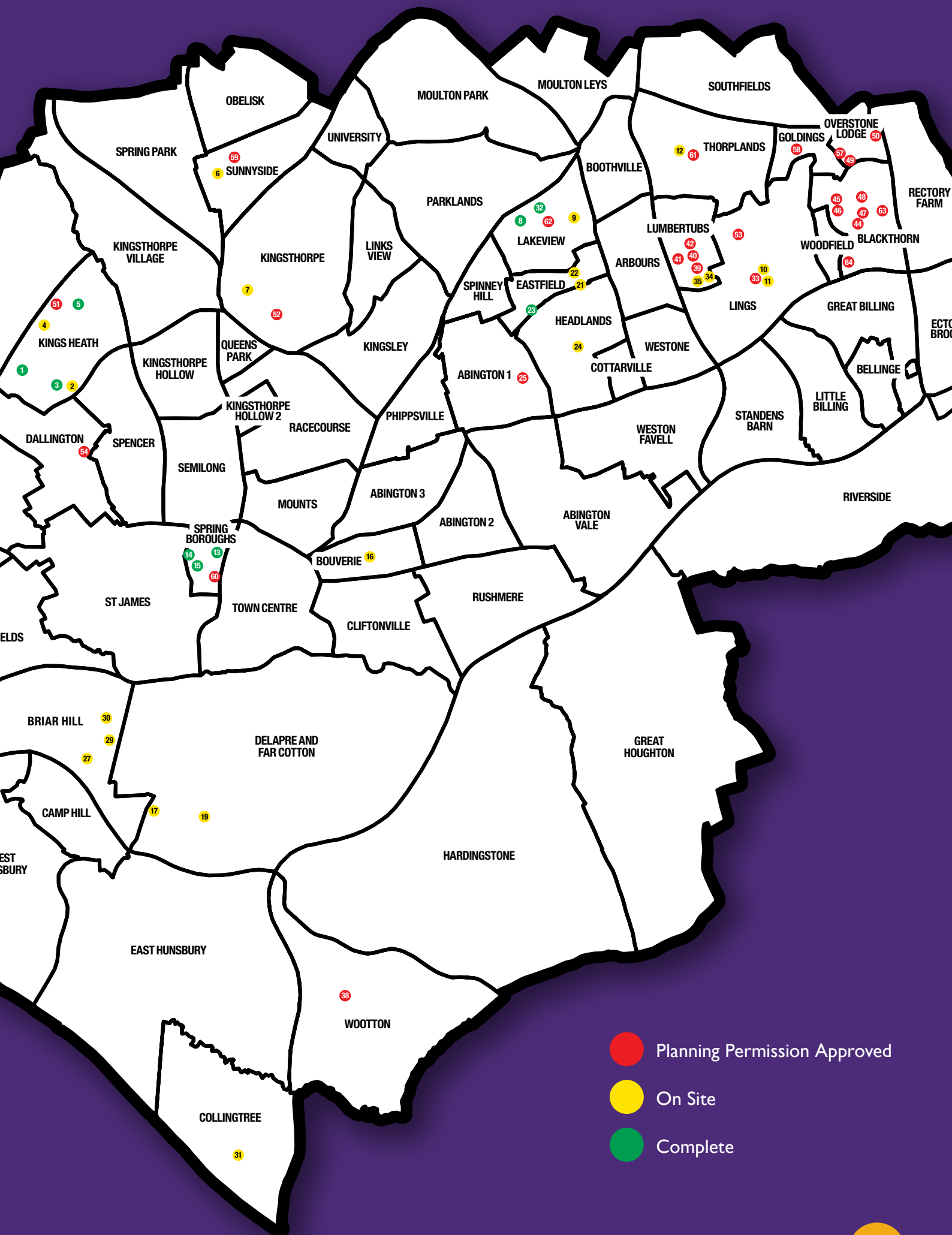
# New homes all over town

We've told you about some of our bigger developments in previous issues of NPH Voice, but did you know that we are building new homes across Northampton?

As you probably know, there are not enough council homes to meet local demand. With around 2,000 households on our housing register, NPH's development team has been working hard to build as many new homes as possible. Take a look at the map to see where we are building near you!

Head to [www.nph.org.uk/development-and-investment](http://www.nph.org.uk/development-and-investment) to find out more.





# THE BIG INTERVIEW

## Meet Rob Wheeler, housing officer for St James and Centenary House

### Tell us about your role at NPH

I'm the housing officer for St James and Centenary House. It's a nice mix. Centenary House is brand new, and it's been great talking to really happy tenants. Some have come from difficult living conditions and are over the moon to have their new home.

My role is really varied. I can go from carrying out fire safety checks, to visiting new tenants to see how they're getting on, and then helping tenants with

home moves. I also work hard to tackle any issues that might be happening in the neighbourhoods I'm based in.

### How did you come to work at NPH?

As soon as I knew what the role of a housing officer was, I knew that's what I wanted to do. I was working as a benefits advisor at the County Council where I assessed care needs. In this role, I helped clients claim additional benefits, which also resulted in more income for the County Council.

I've had a dream start to working at NPH. I love my job, and I've never worked with such lovely people. Everyone is so friendly and keen to help.

### What do you like doing in your spare time?

I love DIY and I've been doing up my house recently, which takes up most of my spare time. My partner isn't as keen as I am though!

I'm really sociable and like to go out with friends. My family are also really important to me, I've just become an uncle and godfather for the first time, so I'm watching the Godfather trilogy to see what the job entails!

I love travelling - I did a five month trip a few years back and visited Thailand, Singapore, Malaysia, Fiji and America. It seems like a long time ago now, so I'm planning my next trip away!

*I've had a dream start to working at NPH. I love my job, and I've never worked with such lovely people. Everyone is so friendly and keen to help.*



# HOMES OF THE FUTURE

You might remember from the last edition of NPH Voice that 2019 is the 100 year anniversary of Council homes. As part of our celebrations, we asked local primary school children to design their vision of what a home will look like in 2119.

We would like to thank all the primary school pupils for getting involved and treating the judging panel to the most fun afternoon they have had for some time. It was such a tough decision that we crowned three winners - Ava and Karolinka from Cedar Road and Ola from St Gregory's.

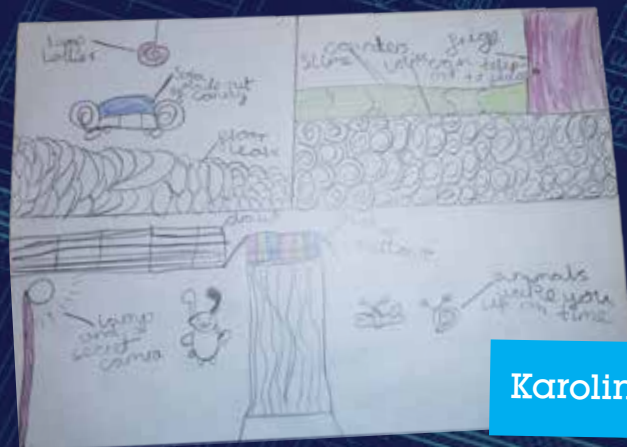
Chris Webb, NPH tenant board member, took part in the judging and told us: "The judging was thoroughly enjoyable. I was inspired to see the imagination and thought the young people put into their work. It gave me renewed hope and confidence in the future generation, especially as so many of the creative pieces demonstrated a developed mindfulness of ecological and environmental issues."

There were some amazing ideas for household features, including eco friendly gadgets to save water, robots to do the housework, under water homes and slides instead of stairs!

Brian Sargeant, Northampton's Deputy Mayor, attended a special assembly at Cedar Road Primary School to present book tokens to the winners and was just as impressed by the designs as the judging panel.



Karolinka



Karolinka



Ava

# Daphne the NPH Bus - Update



**Over the past few months, Daphne the Bus has been driving around Northampton meeting 100's of NPH Tenants! It has been a successful start for our neighbourhood bus, and we have much more coming up.**



## Daphne's first Christmas:

On 20th December, we will be holding an event on the Northampton Market Square from 10:00 - 14:00. Come along and grab a free hot chocolate and a mince pie. There will be Christmas craft activities on board and NPH staff singing Christmas carols, which is not to be missed!



## Daphne Christmas Dates:

Daphne the NPH Bus will not be operating from December 23rd until January 7th.

We apologise for any inconvenience this may cause.

## Daphne 2020 Dates:

In the New Year, we will be announcing our new timetable. We will be making a few adjustments based on your feedback! Look out for updates on Daphne's Facebook page, **@NPH\_news** on Twitter and the NPH website.

# GET ONLINE

**CHECK YOUR  
RENT ACCOUNT  
ONLINE**

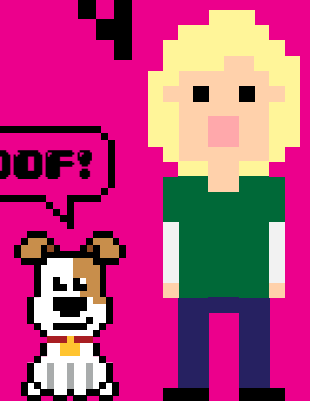
**REPORT AND  
BOOK REPAIRS  
ONLINE**

**SET UP A  
DIRECT DEBIT  
ONLINE**

**UPDATE YOUR  
DETAILS  
ONLINE**

*The man came out at a reasonable time and did an exceptional job and was very helpful as always. Another perfect job completed by the repairs team*

**WOOF!**





## Safe days of Christmas!

There's lots to love about winter - Christmas decorations, spending time with family and friends and some of us even like snow! It's exciting, but there are a few extra things to remember to make sure we stay safe throughout the festivities. Malcolm Burden, our resident fire safety officer has put together his version of the 12 days of Christmas:

- 1.** Decorations and cards can burn easily. Keep them away from fires, candles and other heat sources such as lights.
- 2.** Never leave burning candles unattended, and don't put them near your Christmas tree or other decorations.
- 3.** Always unplug Christmas lights and blow out candles when you leave the house or go to bed.
- 4.** Keep yourself safe from scams if you're shopping online. Make sure you buy from trusted companies that you know are genuine. It's a good idea to check the site you're visiting is secure, this is usually indicated by 'HTTPS' in the browser bar and a small padlock symbol - this usually means the information you share with them is secure.

**5.** Drive safely. If you're going out and drinking, leave the car at home. If you're making long distance journeys, make sure you're prepared for bad weather and take plenty of breaks so you're not driving tired.

**6.** If you're cooking Christmas dinner, give yourself plenty of time and space. Be aware of hot fat, boiling water and sharp knives, and make sure the kitchen isn't too crowded. Wipe up any spills quickly to reduce the risk of slips.

**7.** Check your smoke alarms, and never remove the batteries from them. If your smoke alarm isn't working, contact us urgently. The repairs will be treated as a priority to keep you safe.

**8.** It's a busy time of year for burglars. Make sure you keep presents and valuables out of sight.

**9.** If you're going away for Christmas, don't advertise it on social media! Consider asking a friend or neighbour to keep an eye on your property to check everything is okay.

**10.** Pipes can freeze when the weather is cold. Check out our top tips for avoiding frozen pipes at [www.nph.org/frozen-pipes](http://www.nph.org/frozen-pipes)

**11.** Check on elderly relatives and neighbours, make sure they are fire safe. Also, if it's icy outside, see if they need anything from the shops and check they're warm enough.

**12.** Remember, after drinking alcohol, the risk of accidents in the kitchen increases. Don't cook anything if you've been drinking, stick to sandwiches instead!



# NPH tackling anti-social behaviour



## Our Anti-Social Behaviour service earns accreditation

We're delighted to share the news that our Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) service has received accreditation from HouseMark.



Our Tenancy Compliance team has worked really hard to improve and develop their service. We now have a team member on duty every day, a mediation service (find more about this on the opposite page) and we even have our own sound monitoring equipment.

This accreditation recognises our commitment to preventing and tackling anti-social behaviour.

## Hate Crime Awareness Week

Our ASB service partnered with Northampton Borough Council and Northamptonshire Police to promote Hate Crime Awareness week. The aim for the week was to raise awareness of what hate crime is, what to do if you experience hate crime and how to report it.

We held events across Northampton, and one NPH tenant said "I think it's a positive approach as there are so many people that don't know what to do or how to report hate crime".

Hate crimes are any crimes targeted at a person because of hostility or prejudice towards someone's disability, race or ethnicity, religion or belief, sexual orientation, or transgender identity. A victim does not have to be a member of the group at which the hostility is directed, anyone can be a victim of hate crime.

Hate crime is a criminal offence, and it should be reported to the police immediately, you must also

let them know if you are concerned about your safety. You should also report incidents of hate crime to NPH. You should include the incident report number and the officer's name so that we can make contact with them and agree the next steps with you and the police. We will always keep your information confidential.



# NPH tackling anti-social behaviour



## Mediation service

**“ we were able to sort it out calmly and there hasn’t been any further issues ”**

**Everyone is unique and neighbours often have different lifestyles to each other.**

This can sometimes lead to neighbour disputes over things like household noise, garden issues, children playing, or parking. What may start as a minor irritation can end up in more serious anti-social behaviour if it’s not dealt with quickly.

Our Tenancy Compliance team has three professional mediators who can help to resolve problems between neighbours and support everybody involved.

Our mediators don’t take sides or force anyone to agree to anything they don’t want to. You don’t have to meet with your neighbour face-to-face if you don’t want to. Our mediators aim to help everyone involved to come to an agreement. This agreement will be confidential and won’t be shared with anyone else.

### Case Study

Earlier this year our mediators helped two neighbours who had a dispute about noise.

**Resident 1 said:** “I thought the mediation service was really good. It was straightforward, and it was easy to understand how it could help. The mediator came to see me and listened to my side of the story. She did the same

with my neighbour and we later had a meeting all together at the local community centre. It went really smoothly. Me and my neighbour are now pleasant and say ‘hello’ if we see each other. There is no malice between us and there hasn’t been any further problems. If it worked for me it could work for other people!”

**Resident 2 said:** “The mediator came out to see me and we both agreed on a time and place to meet that suited me and my neighbour. At the meeting at the Community Centre the mediator didn’t get involved, they just listened to both sides. It was good, we were able to sort it out calmly and there hasn’t been any further issues. I’d recommend using a mediator rather than letting a dispute continue. It keeps the peace.”

If you feel that you would benefit from our mediation service, please contact us in any of the following ways:



[www.nph.org.uk/contact-us](http://www.nph.org.uk/contact-us)



0300 330 7003



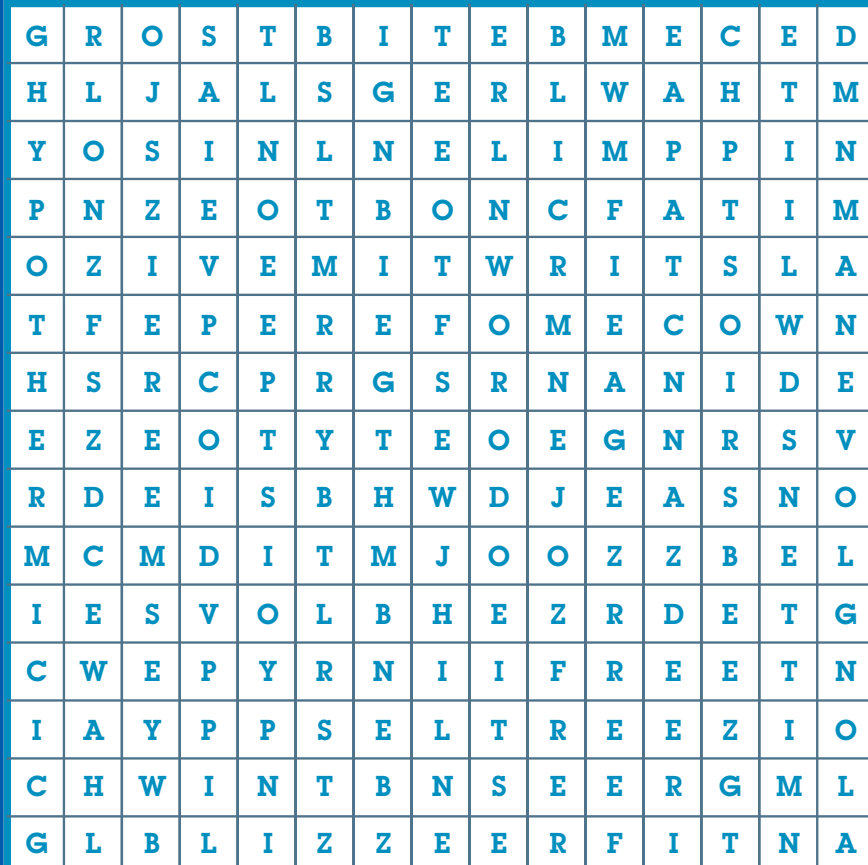
[asb@nph.org.uk](mailto:asb@nph.org.uk)



Speak to one of our friendly advisors at the One Stop Shop

Tel: 0300 330 7003 Email: [voiceeditor@nph.org.uk](mailto:voiceeditor@nph.org.uk)

# WINTER TIME WORDSEARCH



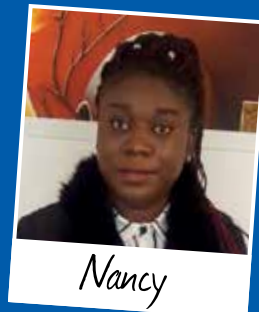
For your chance to win £20 in Love2Shop Vouchers, can you find all the words relating to winter.

- |                                      |                                       |
|--------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> ANTIFREEZE  | <input type="checkbox"/> LONGJOHNS    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> BLIZZARD    | <input type="checkbox"/> MITTENS      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> DECEMBER    | <input type="checkbox"/> NIPPY        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> FROSTBITE   | <input type="checkbox"/> SNOWMAN      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> GLOVES      | <input type="checkbox"/> THAW         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> HYPOTHERMIA | <input type="checkbox"/> WINTERTIME   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> ICICLE      | <input type="checkbox"/> ZERO DEGREES |

Thanks again to tenant, Oscar Woodcock for this winter themed wordsearch. Congratulations to **Nancy**, who bagged the summer prize!

To be in with a chance of being our winter winner, make sure we receive your entry by **Friday 17th January 2020**.

You can take a photo of your completed wordsearch and email it to us with your name and address. Alternatively, you can drop it off at the Guildhall One Stop Shop. Good luck!



## Rent Prize Draw Winners - Win £100!

September Prize  
Draw Winner:  
C Barford



October Prize  
Draw Winner:  
F Miller

Since our last Voice issue there have been 2 winners in our Direct Debit Prize Draw.



**Congratulations to Miss Barford and Miss Miller!**

All you have to do to be entered is to pay your rent by Direct Debit for at least 4 months.